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## Teaching English as a Foreign Language: Perceptions of an In-service Diploma Course

### Thesis

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Joy Northcott

Teaching English as a  
Foreign Language:  
Perceptions of an  
In-service  
Diploma Course

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis reports a study in the area of continuing professional development for teachers of English as a foreign language (TEFL). The research focuses on teachers' retrospective views of their in-service Diploma course, specifically their reasons for taking the course, their learning experience during the course and their perspectives on its impact.

This appears to be an under-researched area, so, in an attempt to frame it, the literature is drawn from a number of different areas: teacher training impact studies within both EFL and mainstream teaching; writing in the area of teachers' careers, motivation and receptivity to professional learning; teacher learning and development; teacher professional identity; and supervision and mentoring of teachers. In terms of methodology, the study takes a case study approach with data analysed through a framework drawn from phenomenography, and investigates the topic through the use of several stages of qualitative, semi-structured, individual interviews.

Some writers in the field of teacher education have taken the view that in-service professional development has little impact on practice but the findings from this study, although tentative and small-scale, are much more optimistic about the long-term value of CPD in the chosen field. Despite having varied opinions of their respective courses, almost all the interviewees could give concrete examples of sustained impact in the context of their subsequent practice, and in many instances it was possible to suggest tentative links between what had made the experience life-changing or otherwise. There was some considerable variation in the types of impact perceived and there also appeared to be a difference in the 'depth' of outcomes. Potential links between impact and other key issues are explored in detail, for example, motivation and receptivity to professional learning, self-identity and self-confidence as a teacher, the importance of prior teaching experience, and the role of course tutors.



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# CHAPTER ONE:

## INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

*See Appendix One for explanation of abbreviations*

### 1.1 THE FOCUS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on TEFL teachers' retrospective views of their in-service Diploma course (TEFL = Teaching English as a Foreign Language. See explanation in Appendix One). The central research question is '*In what ways did TEFL teachers experience their Diploma course, perceived retrospectively?*'. The sub-questions (see Section 1.3 below) include teachers' reasons for taking the course in the first place, their experience of the process of learning in its many different aspects, and their perceptions of the impact of this learning on their practice, not only in its immediate effect in the post-qualifying period, but also in the continuing influence of their professional training on their current and continuing practice today.

This study aims to give voice to a sample of TEFL teachers who have taken the Diploma course, and give them an opportunity to air their retrospective views regarding their course, and hence participate in framing possible recommendations to the profession regarding this qualification. The study does not aim to be a critical analysis of the Diploma course, it is not a piece of action research based on my own work (see Section 1.2 for professional relevance), and it does not aim to forge new policy based on an observation of practice.

### 1.2 CONTEXT

My professional interest in the TEFL Diploma stems from my role as Co-ordinator for EFL Teacher Education at a UK Higher Education institution. My own background is in modern languages, followed by a career in TEFL. I took the TEFL Diploma course (DTEFLA: see Appendix One) as a student in 1992 and more recently have been a tutor on Diploma courses.

Within the U.K., TEFL is frequently seen as the poor cousin of school teaching. Job contracts can be shaky ('*the mobile and transitory existence of the intrepid ELT teacher*': Brigham, 2004, p1), pay in some institutions can be low (Butler, 2009; Brigham, 2004), training courses are

short and promotion can be virtually non-existent. High numbers of people take the initial TEFL course, the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults, or CELTA (offered at 259 centres worldwide, of which 96 are in the UK. Most centres run several courses per year and a typical course might comprise 9 – 15 participants). However, the numbers taking the in-service Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults, or DELTA, are far fewer (there are 52 centres worldwide offering DELTA Module Two, of which 19 are in the UK. Most centres run only one course per year and numbers per course vary). Taking the Diploma course is generally voluntary rather than mandatory. Those who take the DELTA usually intend to stay in the profession on a longer-term basis either within the U.K. or further afield. Subsequent to the Diploma, for those wishing to pursue academic studies related to their profession, the next stage is a master's degree in Applied Linguistics, TEFL or a similar field.

Because of the important role of the Diploma in EFL career development (see Appendix One), and my own role within this context, my study aims to sample TEFL teachers' views of their Diploma course and to explore the impact of the course on their development as a TEFL teacher. Brief initial discussions conducted in the pre-pilot phase of the research showed that the teachers had much to say about their course. It was apparent that the respondents' views had not been solicited before; a number even thanked me for being given the opportunity to talk. My initial conclusion, therefore, was that my chosen topic was one where there was a good deal of researchable material available. Also, a number of writers have questioned the value of continuing professional development (see Section 2.3 in Chapter Two) but the indications, from my own experience of the Diploma both as a trainee and as a tutor, and from my initial pre-pilot interviews, were that the DELTA might, quite possibly, be seen in more positive terms.

### **1.3 RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **Focus**

From the central research question – *'In what ways did TEFL teachers experience their Diploma course, perceived retrospectively?'* – three sub-questions were developed. The framing of the main research question and sub-questions drew not only on the pre-pilot and

pilot interviews (see Chapter Three), but also on my reflections as a DELTA tutor and my reading of the literature. These multiple sources showed that retrospective views of a course can cover a number of areas: reasons for taking the course, the course experience itself, and any perceived outcomes. The present study therefore takes these chronological, and related, aspects as its research sub-questions:

<b>Overall research question</b>	<i>In what ways did TEFL teachers experience their Diploma course, perceived retrospectively?’</i>
<b>Sub-question 1: Individual decisions</b>	<i>What were their reasons for taking the course?</i>
<b>Sub-question 2: Learning experiences</b>	<i>What kind of learning experiences did they have, e.g. theory/practice; role of other people; effect of f/t or p/t study?</i>
<b>Sub-question 3: Perceived impact</b>	<i>What impact did they perceive as a result of the course?</i>

In order to answer these questions, data about perceptions of learning experiences was needed. My reading of the literature led me to the phenomenographic approach to educational research which is particularly relevant to this study (see Chapter Three). Phenomenography was developed in response to a number of educational questions, one of which aimed to describe ‘*the precise differences in what people learn in specific learning tasks and how those differences are related to the different approaches students adopt in learning those tasks*’ (Marton, 1988, p156). Given that phenomenographers are concerned with perceptions rather than actuality (Marton, *ibid*, p145), this approach has considerable relevance to the research questions in the present study.

**Focus on Diploma (DTEFLA, DELTA), not Certificate**

Although the progress of teachers from Certificate to Diploma (see Appendix One) is of interest to the profession, the Certificate course is excluded from this study because: (a) it would necessitate too wide a focus for the dimensions of the project, (b) more research already exists with regard to the Certificate (e.g. Harmer, 1988; Ferguson and Donno, 2003; Brandt, 2006, 2007, 2008), and (c) the research focus is on in-service rather than pre-service

training. Furthermore, only teachers with the DELTA or its forerunner DTEFLA were chosen as participants in this research, which did not therefore extend to the equivalent qualification from Trinity Examining Board (see Appendix One). The purpose of this was to maintain a tighter focus for the project.

### **Views of the Diploma**

The research aimed to investigate how TEFL teachers view their Diploma when considered in retrospect and what kind of professional grounding they consider it to be in the context of their subsequent practice. In that sense, it parallels Nias' aim, in her study of primary teachers, to access the perceived '*relevance and durability of their professional education*' (1991, p148). Despite having some similarities to Nias' work, the present study differs in two respects. Nias did originally plan to explore participants' views of their training, but this ceased to be the main focus of her research, as she later included more general concerns of primary teachers; also, she wished to study her own trainees, whereas the present study is looking at a small sample of Diploma-qualified EFL teachers in general, rather than those who trained in a specific place.

### **Apparent lack of related research**

Although the area of EFL has a well-developed literature (see Chapter Two), there is a singular lack of research material regarding the DELTA. Ferguson and Donno (2003, p27) investigated the pre-service CELTA and highlight the paucity of research. They suggest that this is curious, given the scale on which such courses are conducted, and emphasise the fact that more information is required, including participants' retrospective views of the course.

If there is a dearth of research material regarding the CELTA, there is an even greater lack of material regarding the DELTA. Although the Diploma is not undertaken on quite the scale of the Certificate (Appendix One), it nevertheless represents the highest level teaching qualification, it constitutes an important step on the road to senior teaching posts and a long-term career in the field (Appendix One) and could therefore be seen as equally important. TEFL is not the only area lacking in such research. Eraut suggested in 1994 that in the wider educational sector, and further afield, research into CPE (Continuing Professional Education)

was also sparse: '*...it became clear to me that the whole question of professional learning during and after CPE had been little examined. Even in the education sector, empirical research was limited and the whole field appeared to be underconceptualised*' (1994, p25).

The sole published DELTA study which emerged in the TEFL literature claimed that '*It is crucial that teacher educators develop an understanding of the complex ways in which an in-service course, such as DELTA, interacts with and impacts on teachers taking it. What difference does it make to their knowledge, understanding, awareness, beliefs and practice? Which aspects of the course contribute to teacher learning, and in what ways? Answers to these questions will enable DELTA tutors and course organisers to better understand how to help teachers learn and improve*' (Phipps, 2007, p12). Although it should be borne in mind that this study was published in Cambridge ESOL Research Notes (Cambridge ESOL validates the DELTA qualification) and the editorial body consists of Cambridge ESOL staff, this quotation nevertheless neatly summarises the core focus of my DELTA study. I shall use Phipps' study when discussing the findings in Chapters Four to Six, since the specificity of findings is useful.

One unpublished source (Freedman, 1985) provides a comprehensive evaluation of the TEFL Diploma of the day and some of Freedman's recommendations share similarities with those presented in the current study (see Section 7.3). Although her study provides some points of comparison, it does not, however, address the issue of course outcomes.

### **Impact or retrospective study?**

The apparent reluctance to research this field may partly lie in the fact that graduates from TEFL pre-service/in-service training courses tend to set off for diverse destinations worldwide and attempts to follow them up are often thwarted. It is for this reason that the present study is a retrospective investigation of a range of teachers, rather than an impact study of one particular Diploma course with its attendant problem of tracing and maintaining contact with recent graduates (although even within a single country tracer studies are not necessarily easy: Bradley and Howard, 1992, in the UK; Mathew, 2006, in India).

Impact studies carry their own difficulties. A number of authors (see Section 2.3) admit that there are difficulties with measuring the impact of CPD. Glover and Law (1996, p83) view the reliance on participant's self-reports as a limiting factor. Burchell et al (2002, p220), however, emphasise the importance of teachers' self-reports and individual perspectives when discussing CPD experiences, as do Powell et al (2003, p390). Given the fact that TEFL Diploma graduates are not easy to follow up from a research point of view due to their diversity of location, and therefore impact on their practice and their learners not easy to measure in Joyce and Showers' terms (1988, see Chapter Two), the focus of the present research follows the views of Burchell et al (ibid), Powell et al (ibid), and Harmer (1988: see p7 below), and remains firmly on the **perceived** value, retrospectively, of the DELTA course rather than any immediate impact.

### **Career decisions**

There are other reasons for investigating TEFL teachers later in their careers rather than immediately upon graduation from a Diploma course. Career concerns can affect professional development needs in different ways (Day, 1991; Huberman, 1992). Longer courses such as diplomas and master's degrees deal with longer-term issues (Bradley and Howard, 1992). Also, post-course teaching experience can shed light on the perceived value of a course and place it more firmly within the context of an extended career (Mathew, 2006). Furthermore, change is not always immediate (Freeman, 1989). Participants are perhaps more able later to view their Diploma from a wider perspective. In fact, one interviewee said:

*'We were given a questionnaire at the end of our course but in fact six months down the line could be much more interesting feedback.... Because there's a lot of weighing up of things and it's only as you measure that against your own experience and job that things really start to shake down'.*

In taking a career-long perspective, the interview sample includes both newly- and less recently-trained teachers. In this regard, although the time period in the Diploma study is rather longer, there are some similarities with Bird et al, who sampled MA Education graduates from a 6-year period to see if the *'MA had impacted on their practice in the longer term'* (2005, p434).



## **Retrospective recall**

An investigation into subjects' perspectives on their earlier professional education presupposes that they have sufficient recall of that experience to fuel such perspectives. In theory, it would be possible to find subjects who had insufficient recollection of their Diploma for any useful connections to be made between the course and their subsequent teaching. The literature, however, is not so pessimistic. Bennett (1999) asked twenty-one subjects to reflect on formative educational experiences, as far back as the age of six and across a time gap of up to forty-five years, and nevertheless found that all his subjects could do this, to a greater or lesser extent, and could distinguish between positive and negative experiences of education. Harmer (1988) looks at the retrospective experience of nine graduates of the initial TEFL training course. He claims that most teachers still have powerful memories of their training course even after some considerable time.

Regarding powers of recall, reassurance was provided at a very early stage. For the pre-pilot interviewees the length of time which had elapsed since their course seemed to affect neither the clarity nor the volume of memories; the person who talked at greatest length had trained in 1976, for example. It could also be argued, not only that memories might be missing, but that memories might be skewed or selective. This study focuses, however, on perceptions, not observable fact. Memories may be selective for a reason; perhaps certain aspects of learning on the course were more successful than others. Investigating the fragments of memories that do exist (and in all but one case the memories were far more than mere fragments) may shed light on the reasons why those and not others are stronger.

## **Summary**

In this chapter I have provided some detail about the background of the TEFL Diploma, as well as laying out the rationale for the research; pre-pilot interviewees had much to say, yet reported research on the topic appears to be scarce, and some writers in the area of CPD are pessimistic in their reports about outcomes. I have clarified the research study as a retrospective investigation of a sample of TEFL teachers' perceptions of their in-service Diploma, and outlined the research questions I wished to explore.

Given that DELTA is a little-known qualification, I begin the next chapter by locating it within a wider educational context and then proceed to explore the literature which relates to the issues outlined at the beginning of Section 1.3. This is followed, in Chapter Three, by a discussion of how the research questions will be investigated and details of the methodology adopted and methods employed to investigate teachers' retrospective perceptions. Chapters Four to Six lay out the findings of the study, with each of these three chapters relating to and attempting to answer one of the three research questions. In the final chapter I draw some conclusions informed by this research and offer professional recommendations for the EFL Diploma for the future.

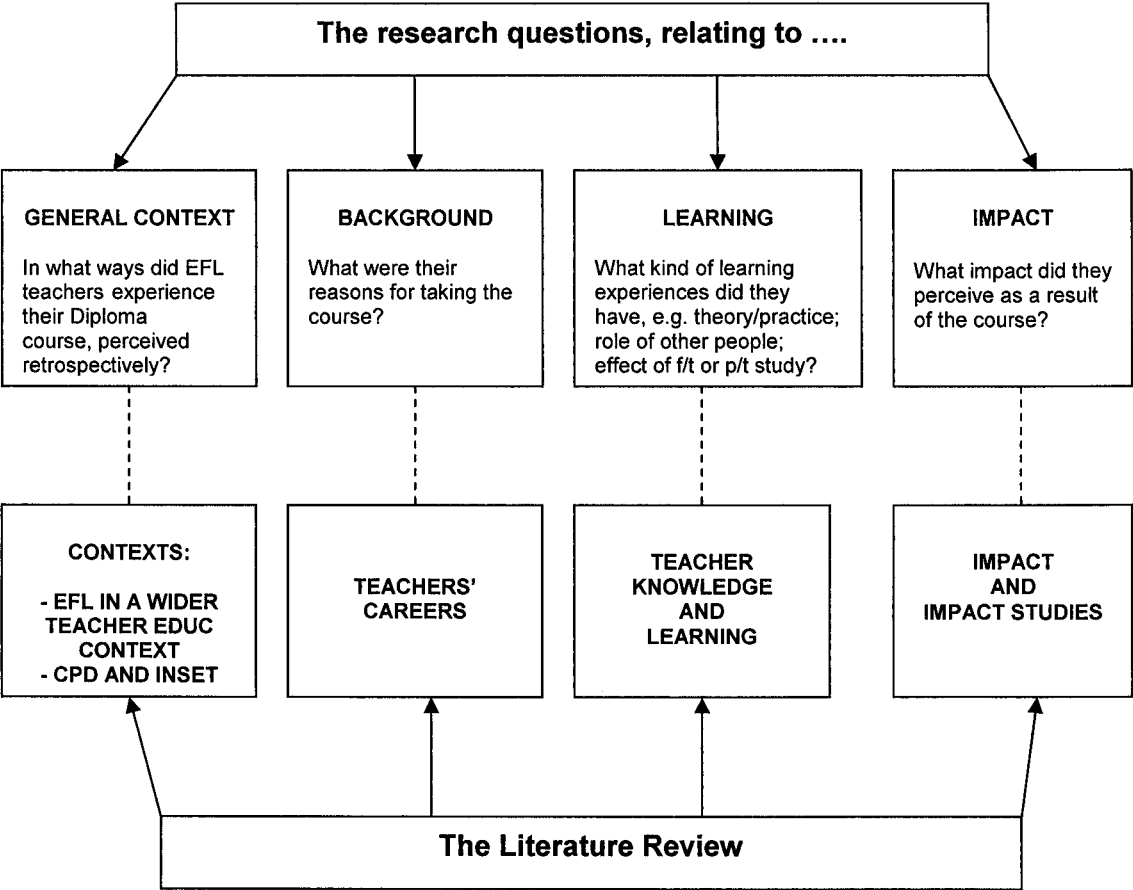
# CHAPTER TWO:

## LITERATURE REVIEW

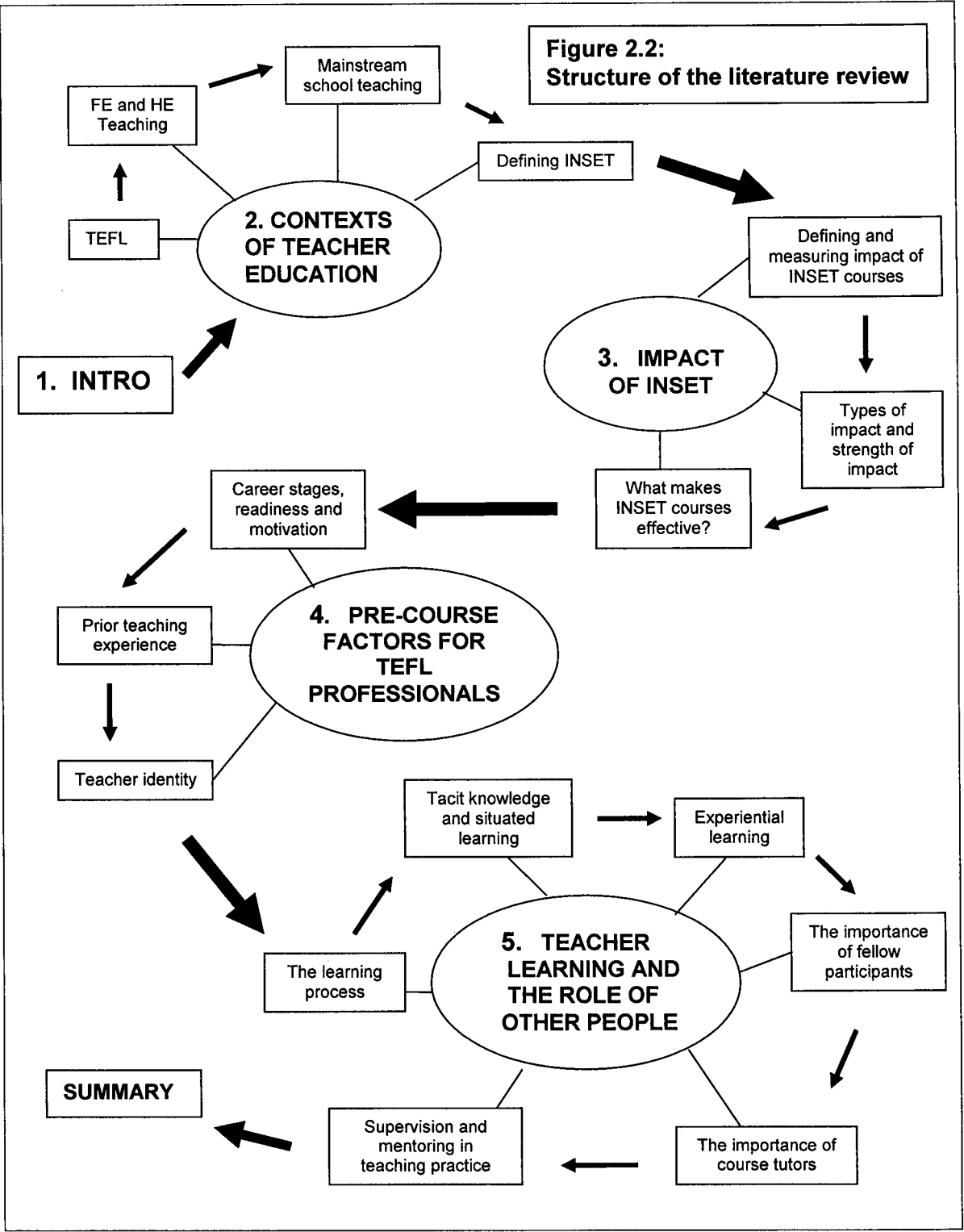
### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Teacher education has been extensively researched and, within this field, there is a large body of writing on *second language* teacher education. Much emanates from the USA, but also from other places where English is taught as a second or foreign language such as the UK, Australia and Hong Kong (the State-of-the-Art Article on 'The language teacher's development' [Mann, 2005] provides an extensive guide to this area of literature). While this literature is highly relevant to my study, the TEFL Diploma itself has received little attention. Given that the present study is therefore located in a relatively under-researched area, I have attempted to set it in a wider research framework by seeking intersections with other aspects of teacher education literature in a range of areas. I have also addressed not just reported research, but other contributions to the literature, such as theoretical studies, analyses of practice, and policy papers. Because the literature on teacher learning is vast, I have sought to structure my reading and literature review into themes. The key questions I have asked derive both from my scrutiny of the literature and also from my analysis of the data. The questions link to four major divisions of relevant literature, which, for purposes of conciseness, are demonstrated in visual form in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1: The research questions and literature review**



My reading within each of these areas, as well as the interview data, has prompted further sub-categories. Because of the wide range of literature I have drawn on and the need to clarify the links, intersections and route I have taken, I seek to convey an overview in diagrammatic form below. Figure 2.2 shows the four main divisions, with the arrows demonstrating the direction the literature review will take.



I have foregrounded the **Impact** category since, on analysing the interview data, I discovered that impact was affected by a number of other factors. I therefore decided, in both the literature review and subsequent chapters, to bring Impact forward and discuss it at an earlier stage. The numbers in Figure 2.2 above correspond to the sections within the literature review. Each section will be discussed following the order set out in the diagram. The route through

the literature also corresponds to the sequence used in the presentation of the findings in Chapters Four to Six.

## 2.2 CONTEXTS

English is learned as a foreign or second language in a large number of countries throughout the world. The forms that English language teacher education takes are therefore myriad and depend on the needs of each individual context and culture. It should be noted that the DELTA programme is only one very small niche within the global English language teaching community of practice and may differ from other forms of English language teacher education that take place.

### **The development of TEFL training**

The first training of TEFL teachers in the UK took place in 1962 in the form of short intensive courses, the main aim of which was to provide as much practical training and classroom exposure as possible (Haycraft, 1988). This contrasts with Eraut's objection (1994, p11) to many initial professional education syllabi, namely, that these are notoriously overcrowded due to their attempts to include all the knowledge practitioners are likely to need for a lifetime in the profession, regardless of the ability at the initial stage to process and use the knowledge. His criticism that there is '*increasing evidence that the frontloading of theory is extremely inefficient*' (ibid, p11) cannot be levelled at the world of TEFL, since the initial training course is very practical and teaching practice happens from an early stage. The CELTA – at 4 weeks' duration full-time – has to be kept both brief and affordable because trainees are almost always self-funding and many take the course with the aim of travelling abroad before making a committed career choice. The course, therefore, has to provide an efficient, cost-effective way of equipping trainees to teach as well as possible in the medium term within these aims. Haycraft does make the point (1988, p6) that initial training is only the beginning; it is not sufficient to serve trainees for the length of their careers.

For those who wish to remain in the field, this comment is very relevant. The CELTA puts them into the classroom where, ideally, they build up sufficient practical experience to be

useful to them at the next stage, the Diploma. The Certificate and Diploma thus belong in a linked sequence; before taking the second, more theoretical, course teachers are expected to have acquired enough experience and knowledge of teaching contexts to make sense of the Diploma theory. The dichotomy which has existed in mainstream teaching (Day 1999, p150) between the theoretical focus in universities/colleges and the practical reality of schools/classrooms (and the limited connection between the two) is not apparent in the TEFL Certificate/Diploma portfolio. The fact that these two distinct courses are linked, complementary stages within the professional career of EFL teachers relates to Day's (1991) and Berliner's (1994) ideas about the different career stages of teachers. The TEFL training portfolio therefore specifically aims to cater for teachers at different key stages on their career journey.

Eraut's views lend support to the TEFL portfolio of training courses. Although discussing professional education generally, rather than teaching in particular, he appears to favour (1994, p120) a qualification *system* rather than a single qualification, and suggests postponing some content areas until after the initial qualification so that trainees are better prepared to make use of the content when they do meet it, and pruning the quantity of propositional knowledge so that it can be better integrated with practical knowledge and experience. Roberts (1998, p211) mentions the TEFL portfolio of courses as being in line with current thinking in teacher education, i.e. that a basic level of classroom competence followed by real classroom experience are a prerequisite to further development.

Thus the TEFL Diploma, when taken after a shorter, more practical Certificate (or in some cases, with no initial qualification at all: Edwards, C. 1997) and some years' teaching experience, sets up 'readiness' for learning on the Diploma. Having a system of initial and more advanced TEFL qualifications means that the latter can assist '*with the integration and organisation of previous experience*' (Eraut, 1994, p11). This is consistent with Eraut's further claim that '*the potential of work-related, if not always work-based, mid-career professional education is underestimated*' (ibid, p12).

## Further Education

There are some points of comparison between teacher training in TEFL and in the Further Education sector. Until the introduction of compulsory teaching qualifications in that sector, a number of staff held no teaching qualifications, and the provision of Initial Teacher Education was uneven; qualifications were not necessarily comparable and were sometimes offered in-house (Lucas 2004). Within TEFL, incomparability of qualifications to a certain extent still exists; the two externally validated Certificates (Appendix One) sit alongside innumerable other Certificates offered by universities and colleges and pre-service in-house programmes offered by commercial language schools such as Linguarama and Berlitz. Furthermore, the number of teaching hours and the amount of observed teaching practice also differs, as it did in the FE sector (Lucas 2004). In the TEFL field, these differences perhaps relate to economic factors and the plethora of different contexts in which TEFL takes place. However, there has clearly been a comparable lack of regulation and standardisation in both sectors.

The introduction of Government regulations regarding FE teaching qualifications (which now cover those teaching ESOL in Further Education Colleges) has some similarities with the British Council's regulations regarding the numbers of TEFL-initiated teachers (with a validated Certificate) and TEFL-qualified teachers (with a validated Diploma) a teaching institution should employ, should it wish to be officially recognised by the British Council. There is, however, nothing comparable in TEFL to the *Further Education Teachers' Continuing Professional Development and Registration (England) Regulations 2007*. The British Council inspection regulations state that teachers should be given development opportunities but provides no specific details, and there is no professional registration body for all TEFL teachers in the UK (or abroad). In the early 2000s an organisation called BIELT (British Institute for English Language Teaching) was launched but only lasted a year or two due to lack of support and interest. An association does exist, IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language), with regional branches, but membership is optional and often at institutional rather than individual level. The reasons for the lack of a professional body may be due to the diverse TEFL contexts and the organic nature of the development of the TEFL industry; nevertheless, this does point to a certain marginalisation or



casualisation of the workforce, which is what the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) standards were established to challenge in the FE sector.

### **Higher Education**

Professional training in the HE sector may also serve as a useful source against which to compare TEFL provision. Government insistence on quality teaching in UK HE institutions has led to a proliferation of Post-graduate Certificates (Knight, 2006) but research reports on the impact of such courses appear to be inconclusive (Knight, 2006; Knight et al, 2006; Prosser et al, 2006), with Knight et al (2006) suggesting that non-event learning is of greater benefit to the professional development of HE staff than formal courses.

### **Mainstream teaching**

Comparing CPD practices in mainstream school teaching with those of TEFL may also help to contextualise TEFL more clearly. One of Day's key precepts regarding teacher development is that it is the *'joint responsibility of teachers, schools and government'* (1999, p2). At this very fundamental level, TEFL diverges from mainstream education; the disparate contexts of TEFL mean that individual teachers are generally responsible for their own career progression and lifelong professional development. This is in marked contrast to mainstream school teaching: Day (1999, p150), when discussing school teaching, mentions the 'old days' when *'for the most part, professional development was an individual's affair'*. Craft (2000) devotes a chapter to the topic of 'Learning individuals, learning schools' and refers (p218) to Watson and Fullan's argument (1992) that teacher development and school development go together and are interlinked. Such ideas do not seem to receive as much attention in the current literature on TEFL teacher education.

Craft also points to further trends towards increased national centralisation of teaching standards and CPD, as well as more *'on-the-job competence-related training'* (2000, p229). While both CELTA and DELTA assessment procedures include competences which need to be met, the nearest there is in the world of TEFL to centralised standards is the British Council's virtual monopoly in quality assurance. Accreditation by the British Council (through

regular, rigorous inspections of teaching establishments) is often critical for a teaching institution's status.

### **INSET: Definitions**

Although the term 'INSET' tends to be used mostly for 'organised' group programmes, whereas 'CPD' is broader and also includes individually initiated activity, the terms are often used interchangeably; likewise in this research project. A useful definition to begin with is Bolam's delineation of CPD, since it is short but general and all-embracing:

*'CPD embraces those education, training and job-embedded support activities engaged in by teachers, following their initial certification... Such activities are aimed primarily at adding to their professional knowledge, improving their professional skills and helping them to clarify their professional values so that they can educate their students more effectively'.*

(Bolam 2000, quoting Bolam 1993)

This definition provides three distinctly different goals (leading also to a fourth) which, in fact, cover the majority of outcomes mentioned by participants in the DELTA study (Chapter Four). The Cambridge ESOL website provides DELTA programme goals which are remarkably similar to Bolam's, although the fourth focuses not on learners but on jobs (perhaps understandable since the context is essentially its 'advertisement' to the TEFL world):

- *deepen your understanding of the principles and practices of teaching the English language to adults*
- *examine your current beliefs and practices*
- *apply the results of your learning and reflection to your current teaching position and more senior roles'*

Other definitions also exist. Day (1999, p131) clarifies his use of the term INSET, in relation to mainstream teacher education, as meaning '*planned event... accredited or non-accredited... in order to distinguish it from less formal in-school development work*'. Cope et al (1992, p298), amongst others, point out the number of different varieties of provision, such as p/t or f/t, long or short, mainly practical ('instrumental') or mainly theoretical, resulting in certification or not, and that this diversity therefore makes generalisation difficult. They also point out that INSET

studies need to make clear their position in relation to these criteria since this will affect the experience and impact of courses. This is a key point in relation to the present study as it is not easy to pinpoint DELTA in relation to these criteria. It certainly results in certification, but can be taken part-time or full-time, the length is relative (long in comparison to one-day INSET workshops, short relative to master's degrees) and it does not claim to be either mainly theoretical or mainly practical ('*Your course features a balance of theory and practice*': Cambridge ESOL website). Bearing in mind Cope et al's point (1992), perhaps the great diversity of different interviewees' experiences is related to the fact that it is not easily definable and that many different formats of DELTA exist, all with their own benefits and drawbacks.

### **Shorter and longer INSET courses**

Within ELT, Waters (2006) gives two distinct definitions of INSET. His own use of the term in the paper refers to '*school-focused*' (Hopkins, 1986) *training provided by educational authorities in order to support immediate teaching priorities. In ELT, this form of INSET typically accompanies the introduction of a new classroom teaching approach or set of teaching materials*' (ibid, p49). Clearly DELTA does not fit this definition in that it is not agenda-led in the same way. Waters contrasts his first definition with other forms of INSET which '*may have a less directly school-focused purpose (such as, e.g. undertaking an MA degree)*' (ibid, p50), a distinction also made by Cope et al (1992) in their study of in-service degrees. DELTA sits more comfortably in this (second) category and in this sense there are more parallels with the (non-ELT) studies by Williams (2005), Davies and Preston (2002), Powell et al (2003), Ayling (1989), Bradley and Howard (1992), Inglis et al (1992), Burchell et al (2002) and Cope et al (1992), hence these studies are of more significance to this research project than Waters' research which investigates school-based follow-up to ELT INSET. These studies all investigated the role of academic study at undergraduate/post-graduate level in teachers' professional development and all demonstrated that the teachers who undertook the in-service degree courses saw them as valuable (see Section 2.3).

Nevertheless, although ELT INSET impact studies (e.g. Lamb, 1995; Hayes, 1995; Waters and Vilches, 2000; Waters, 2006), focus on short, agenda-led courses, they do have a useful contribution to make to the present study, in that they aim to highlight necessary conditions for INSET impact. Most of these studies have points of relevance to DELTA, hence they are included in the typology at the end of Section 2.3, as are points from other studies referred to in this section.

### **A 'hybrid' INSET course**

DELTA is classed as Level 7 on the new National Qualifications Framework (Cambridge ESOL website) and the DELTA Handbook for Tutors and Candidates states (2008, p71) that *'Centres should advise candidates that Delta modules are at master's level'*. Despite parallels with master's courses, DELTA is nevertheless not purely academic study and need not be undertaken in a college or university. In some ways, DELTA is therefore a 'hybrid'. It is definitely an in-service course, yet it also has pre-service characteristics, in that it combines academic study with assessed teaching practice, and that it attempts to cover the 'whole job' of teaching, rather than certain defined pockets, such as *'a new classroom teaching approach or set of materials'* (Waters, *ibid*, p49).

It is possible that the 'transience' of the EFL career path (Brigham, 2004; Johnston, 1997; Logan and Moore, 2004) has led to the duality of qualifications. But what is it about a relatively short Diploma course which, when taken full-time, only lasts two to three months, that appears to have had such a strong and lasting impact on the interviewees' professional lives? This, together with the ideas of Day (1999) and others on teachers' careers, and Eraut (1994) and others on the nature of teacher learning, all points to the possibility of something unique about the model of CPD demonstrated in the TEFL Diploma which, I would argue, leads to this perceived strength of impact and to the intensity of experience which remains in people's memories.

## **2.3 IMPACT OF INSET: HOW THIS RELATES TO THE TEFL DIPLOMA**

Much has been written about the impact or outcomes of CPD across the education sector, and the data suggests that the TEFL Diploma course can exert considerable influence on subsequent teaching. For these reasons exploring the nature of impact is one of the key aims in this study.

### **Impact: defining and measuring**

Impact studies carry certain difficulties. A number of authors (for example, TTA, 1995; Flecknoe, 2000; Guskey, 2000; Aubrey, 1988) admit that there are difficulties with measuring the impact of CPD. There is also some debate about the criteria of effectiveness (Guskey, 2000, p32) and the meaning of the term 'impact'. Guskey notes that some studies are based on evaluations of participants' reactions to the experience, some are based on changes in their attitudes or commitment to an innovation, whilst others consider the level of implementation of new practices or skills. Joyce and Showers (1988), however, chose to measure the effect on pupils' learning. Whilst this is a worthy attempt to gauge the value of CPD, it does assume a direct cause and effect relationship which is open to the objections that it is (a) too simplistic, (b) difficult to measure, and (c) unduly focused on immediate post-course impact. In the present study, teachers certainly identified the impact of the DELTA as belonging to a much longer time-scale. Craft, when referring to Bradley's 1991 criteria for evaluating CPD, highlights *'the importance of a longer-term, process view of CPD as a part of the continuing education of teachers'* (Craft, 2000, p153). Burchell et al (2002) caution that flexibility is needed in the interpretation of CPD and impact. Cope et al (1992, p306), Powell et al (2003, p391), Williams, R. (2005, p465) and Day (1999, p137), amongst others, also believe that INSET should be regarded with a wider lens and that the impact need not be directly measurable in children's achievement and immediate classroom changes.

There are other definitions of impact. Davies and Preston (2002) highlight motivational and attitudinal outcomes as being the most interesting for their particular study, possibly because they were studying the impact of a higher degree and therefore took a wider view of impact. In Powell et al's study, (2003, p399), 'impact' was taken to mean changes in professional knowledge, practices and affective responses as perceived by primary and secondary

practitioners. Harland and Kinder's study (1997), although different from the TEFL Diploma study in that it operated in the context of primary teaching and aimed explicitly to transfer new classroom skills, is nevertheless particularly useful since it shows the diversity of outcomes. Their study draws out an eight-point typology of outcomes: material and provisionary; informational; new awareness; value congruence; affective; motivational and attitudinal; knowledge and skill; institutional. Because of its breadth, Harland and Kinder's list was used to help structure some of the interview questions in the present study.

### **Types of impact**

Diverse effects have been noted in a wide range of impact studies. These have included, for example: changes in professional and personal attitudes, such as enhanced professional self-esteem (Butcher and Sieminski, 2006), greater confidence (Inglis et al, 1992; Cope et al, 1992; Ayling, 1989; Powell et al, 2003; Davies and Preston, 2002), the ability to reflect on practice (Bradley and Howard, 1992; Ayling, 1989; Powell et al, 2003; Williams, R., 2005), fundamental changes in outlook (Ayling, 1989; Williams, R., 2005); contributions to school management (Inglis et al, 1992; Bradley and Howard, 1992); career enhancement (Inglis et al, 1992; Bradley and Howard, 1992; Cope et al, 1992; Ayling, 1989); a wider understanding of educational knowledge and processes (Ayling, 1989; Inglis et al, 1992; Cope et al, 1992; Powell et al, 2003); and enhanced teaching competence and subject knowledge (Davies and Preston, 2002).

The effects on classroom practice, however, are more mixed. In the study by Davies and Preston (2002) two-thirds of the teachers claimed that the course had influenced their subsequent classroom practice; Williams, R. (2005) stated that four of her six interviewees had changed their practice in various ways; and Burchell et al claim (2002) that teachers clearly expect CPD to have significance in the classroom. Fewer teachers in the other studies, however, saw the impact on their classroom practice as being significant, and Cope et al (1992) concluded that their participants had not seen specific gains in classroom skills as even being an appropriate outcome. Nevertheless, the findings of the present study suggest that the perceived impact was broad, and that it included classroom practice as well as other factors.

Returning to the DELTA study mentioned on p5, Phipps studied a DELTA participant during the first part of the course in order to investigate possible impact on teaching, and states that *'The DELTA clearly made a difference to the teacher in terms of confidence, awareness, beliefs and classroom teaching'* (2007, p13), all of which are mirrored in the present study. However, he also states that *'In terms of teaching, the course did not seem to lead to any radical changes'* (ibid, p13), a finding which diverges from the present study. This suggests that, although mid-course research, as with Phipps' study, can help track the specific changes to teachers' beliefs, it is perhaps not as beneficial as post-course research in investigating the potential impact of a course.

### **The strength of impact**

There are a number of views regarding the strength of impact of CPD courses. Several writers question the impact of professional development experiences (Roberts, 1998, p207; Fullan, 2001, p254; Freeman, 1992). Knight et al (2006, p326) discuss studies with Open University teachers which emphasise non-formal learning over event-based learning. Craft quotes a MORI poll for the TTA (1995, in Craft, 2000, p48) which found that only 26% of those surveyed thought professional development had any impact on practice. Eraut also states *'The evidence that subsequent practice is affected by CPE (Continuing Professional Education) is scanty and more often negative than positive'* (1994, p25).

Other writers conclude differently, however. Powell et al (2003), when discussing longer courses, report more positive views, as does Day (1999, p137). There is a difference between shorter, possibly top-down agenda-led courses, which according to many writers, do not show demonstrable changes, and those which are longer, more comprehensive and accredited, as outlined in the INSET section above, and which do effect positive change.

However, the situation is no doubt more complex and it is probable that a combination of factors work synergistically to produce a positive effect. Harland and Kinder (1997), for example, comment that affective outcomes, important though they are, need to go hand-in-

hand with new knowledge and skills, if the effects are to be long-lasting. Burchell et al (2002, p228) give a similar view, and conclude that *'it is their ability to articulate the interplay between the specific/tangible outcomes and the more affective, motivational and value-based dimensions that suggest to us a more sustained and secure shift in professional development'*. Bird et al also discuss a combination of outcomes, suggesting the importance of a change in self-concept together with other affective factors as having a role in impact on practice (2005, p448). Each of these three studies is significant since the Diploma study also demonstrates outcomes in these areas. The differences between the TEFL context and the mainstream teaching context, however, may also be relevant.

### **What makes INSET courses effective?**

Day states *'The aim of continuing professional development is deceptively simple...The practice, however, is complex'* (1999, p205). Doing justice to this is not an easy task, but a survey of the literature suggests that certain features should be present in order to enhance the effectiveness of INSET courses. Although some of the following writers were investigating shorter, agenda-led courses (in EFL), their suggestions are nevertheless useful. Others were writing in the broader field of teacher learning. I present the ideas as a typology, against which I will match the interview data afterwards. According to the following writers, a teacher education course should:



1. **Adopt a broadly social constructivist approach** (Roberts, 1998; Singh and Richards, 2006) and **value existing knowledge** (Hayes, 1995). The pre-course experience of DELTA trainees is particularly significant.
2. **Explore beliefs** (Singh and Richards, 2006; Lamb, 1995; Roberts, 1998; Pennington, 1990). A definite part of the DELTA syllabus, but whether/how depends on the tutors.
3. **Use trainers who are themselves teachers** (Hayes, 1995; Freedman, 1985).
4. **Include learning experiences which are: experiential** (Waters, 2006; Roberts, 1998; Kolb, 1993), **co-operative** (Hayes, 1995; Singh and Richards, 2006), **task-based** (Hayes, 1995), **interactive** (Knowles, 1996; Wenger, 1999) and **inductive** (Hayes, 1995). Teaching on Diploma courses usually has all of these. The interviewees had much to say.
5. **Cater for different learning styles** (Craft, 2000; Freedman, 1985). Subjects in the present study described their own preferred learning styles in very different ways.
6. **Contain ideas relevant to participants' teaching context(s)** (Waters, 2006; Hayes, 1995; Holliday, 1994). Not always easy, given the variety of TEFL teaching contexts.
7. **Include coaching/support** (Rhodes and Hoghton-Hill, 2000; Hayes, 1995; Joyce and Showers, 1980). This depends on each Diploma course.
8. **Be participant-led and focus on teachers' particular development needs** (Day, 1999, p137). Not easy, given the tight syllabus and intensity of f/t courses.
9. **Include follow-up** (Day, 1999; Hayes, 1995; Waters, 2006; Waters and Vilches, 2000). This depends on the interest/ability/time/resources of management.

Day (1999, p205) suggests that another factor is also important: participants' readiness, in career, intellectual or emotional terms, to take the course, an idea discussed further below.

## **2.4 PRE-COURSE FACTORS FOR TEFL PROFESSIONALS**

### **Readiness**

Because TEFL teachers can choose to take the Diploma at different stages in their career, Day's ideas (1999, p68) of teachers' 'readiness' to embrace new learning at different points are particularly interesting. For some teachers, learning is '*an evolutionary, gradual,*

*cumulative process*' but a number of his research subjects mentioned '*crucial landmark stages of their life and/or career development*' (Day, *ibid*, p65).

There are a number of studies which have demonstrated that adults pass through different developmental phases and may be more 'ready' at certain times to undergo new learning processes. One particular study talks of the 'stabilisation' phase where the beginner or novice stage is over and teachers begin to have a sense of mastery of teaching (Huberman, 1995). Day (1999, p61) highlights this as a key stage and reiterates Cooper's point (1982) that this is when teachers particularly need new ideas and challenges. Day also states that teachers who have emerged from the novice stage of their careers do seek and benefit from wider perspectives on teaching (*ibid*, p150), an idea which appears to tie in with Eraut's suggestion of postponing certain areas of knowledge until after the initial qualification, so that teachers are better prepared to use the knowledge (1994, p120). Freeman (1994, 2002) also believes that 'front-loading' of professional input on ITE courses is not recommended. Eraut warns that propositional knowledge, often front-loaded, which is not used in practice, or for which there seems to be no obvious practical use, is '*consigned to cold storage*' (*ibid*, p120). This suggests that when EFL teachers come 'ready' to a DELTA course, they will be better able to assimilate the propositional knowledge (Eraut, *ibid*) they deem relevant because they can already see the contexts in which it can be utilised, they can match it with their process knowledge (Eraut, *ibid*) and also integrate it into the teaching practice on the course.

The stabilisation stage, and readiness for new ideas, however, does not happen at the same point for everybody; some of the teachers in the Diploma study chose to take the course after only two years' teaching and some after a considerably longer time, and all at different ages. The literature suggests there are different factors at work. Teachers' career cycles can be influenced by their own personal or organisational environment (Fessler and Christensen, 1992). Age may not be relevant to career stage, more important can be cognitive-developmental stage, which is not dependent on age or career cycle (Oja, 1989).

The choice to do the Diploma course is not taken lightly and is generally taken when individual EFL teachers feel is the right time, which may differ from person to person. This is one of the main differences between studies which focus on *in-school*, top-down INSET courses and those which focus on voluntary, longer courses such as master's degrees. Many top-down CPD policies fail to engage individual teachers; it is likely that courses for which teachers volunteer and for which they feel 'ready' and motivated will have greater success. Although the writers above were operating in a different context, the concept of 'readiness' is particularly pertinent when viewed with a TEFL focus and will inform one of the interview questions regarding participants' decisions to take the Diploma course (Appendix Two).

It is important that both teachers and schools have an understanding of these key learning stages and processes (Day, 1999, p65; Craft, 2000, ch3). Craft (2000, p226) warns that the failure of schools to exploit the professional development of their staff can be detrimental to both school and teacher but does point out that this situation was '*in the past*'; interview data suggests that in EFL this attitude may still be prevalent.

## **Motivation**

Both 'readiness' for and understanding of learning processes are important, but motivation also plays a key role in effective learning (Day, 1999) and can be compromised if teachers feel they have no control over the process and if change is forced upon them (Rubin, 1989). EFL teachers may be encouraged to take the Diploma by their employers, but usually their decision is personal and career-based. Given this, it is possible that personal commitment to the course may lead to greater motivation and greater '*ownership of learning*' (Day, *ibid*, p205).

There are a variety of specific motivational factors for embarking on a professional development course, e.g. a desire to obtain the piece of paper (Ayling, 1989) or the award (Bradley and Howard, 1992; Johnston, 1994; Bird et al, 2005); the ambition to find a better job (Freedman, 1985); a wish to improve knowledge and teaching skills (Johnston, 1994); or the urge for a 'sabbatical', i.e. thinking time away from classroom pressures (Johnston, 1994). These studies are all useful in terms of goals and outcomes, in that they are probably more

similar to the TEFL 'hybrid' Diploma than are studies about short, in-school INSET activity. Nevertheless, there are critical differences; the courses outlined in these studies do not include teaching practice (apart from Freedman, 1985) and the studies generally make looser claims about the link between the course and changes in classroom practice than the TEFL Diploma course. For this reason the individual teacher's 'need' to improve teaching skills is perhaps not as pressing as a TEFL Diploma candidate's (and the teaching on an MA course not so obviously geared towards it: Johnston, 1994).

Some of the reasons mentioned above could be classed as 'internal' motivations, such as a wish to improve knowledge and teaching skills, whereas others are extrinsic, e.g. the ambition to find a better job. The study by Knight et al (2006), investigating professional development in Higher Education, outlined four different types of motivation reported by university teachers: critical incident, professional (extrinsic), interpersonal, professional (intrinsic), with the latter as the commonest category. The TEFL Diploma teachers, however, give reasons which fall clearly into only the second and fourth of these categories (see Section 5.1) and for this reason I have chosen to use the framework of Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) which distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and also between different forms of extrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Extrinsic motivation can be defined as *'doing something because it leads to a separable outcome'* (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p55) or *'motivation based on external incentives, such as pay, praise, attention'* (Wade and Tavis, 1990, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, p370). Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is *'the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence'* (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p56). Ryan and Deci's approach to intrinsic motivation focuses on *'psychological needs – namely, the innate needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness'* (ibid, p57). I have interpreted this as a teacher's *internal, individually* driven, professional need for self-improvement, perhaps part of the need for self-actualisation as proposed by Maslow (Wade and Tavis, 1990, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, p377), as opposed to the instrumental need for a qualification or a better job contract, which teachers in this study also mentioned. I emphasise the words 'internal' and 'individual' because some writers investigating pre-service

motivations for choosing teaching as a career (e.g. Beltman and Wosnitza, 2008; Kniveton, 2004), have taken the perspective that individual and social aspects of motivation interact and that *'other people are regarded as co-constructors of individual motivation'* (Beltman and Wosnitza, 2008, p49). Although some of the extrinsic or instrumental motivations for taking the Diploma course might have been affected by social interactions, the instances in the data of the intrinsic wish to improve teaching appeared mostly to come from within (Chapter Five).

Motivation is a complex issue. Ryan and Deci state that *'intrinsic motivation results in high quality learning and creativity'* (2000, p55) but Schunk warns that *'self-efficacy, goals, and intrinsic motivation do **not** always predict achievement outcomes'* (2000, p118, my emphasis), also *'powerful external constraints can undermine intrinsic motivation'* (Locke and Latham, 1990, cited in Schunk, 2000, p118). The first and last of these three points have echoes in the Diploma data but the second does not.

A further complexity lies in the nature of extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation has often been seen as a poorer form of motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000) but Ryan and Deci (ibid) demonstrate that this is a continuum, depending on the degree to which the factors are autonomous and self-determined, and that the effect of some forms of extrinsic motivation can be remarkably similar to the effect of intrinsic motivation. This is particularly useful to the Diploma study, since there are a number of teachers who profess only extrinsic motivation in the interview but who appear very enthusiastic about the Diploma course and who report considerable outcomes more in keeping with those reported by the intrinsically motivated respondents (see Section 5.1).

### **Prior teaching experience**

As well as readiness and motivation, pre-course factors also include pre-Diploma teaching experience. In-service DELTA trainees bring much to a Diploma course in terms of their own practice, beliefs and private theories (Eraut, 1994) that both fuel and result from that practice. For this reason, there is great potential for learning and integration of new knowledge. There is a need for course participants to explore their pre-course experience before they are

confronted with new theory (Williams, R. 2005), and teacher trainers need the skills and the methodology to help trainees 'unpack' their own 'baggage' before they are able to reconstruct their knowledge (Williams, M. 2003, p7). This is particularly important in TEFL where the participants have worked in diverse cultural settings.

### **Teacher identity**

As well as prior experience, Diploma participants also bring a developed teacher identity and the potential for that identity to feel threatened or unsettled when presented with new ideas or new 'public theories'. Language teacher identity has been studied within the framework of social identity theory in the study by Varghese et al (2005), a useful construct for many ELT issues, but not relevant to the Diploma study since issues in this area, such as native speaker versus non-native speaker language teacher, did not arise in the Diploma interviews. It has also been studied in the context of 'identity as pedagogy' (Varghese et al, 2005), where identity is co-constructed in the classroom through the discourse between students and teachers, another useful concept but one which was not found to be of relevance to this study. The framework of particular interest is the notion of identity formation in the context of situated learning and communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Varghese, 2000, cited in Varghese, 2005), where learning is a process of identifying with and becoming active within a community of other practitioners.

This suggests that, as Certificate-qualified EFL teachers (i.e. those who do not yet have the Diploma) become more experienced, their professional self-identity becomes stronger and more confident, especially if they are working in a supportive language school where CPD is encouraged. Lave and Wenger state that working with '*adept practitioners*' makes learning '*legitimate and of value from the point of view of the apprentice*' (ibid, p110). There is the risk, however, that if they are working alongside 'expert' (for example, Diploma-qualified) teachers, they may see themselves as less active, more peripheral members, and their self-identity as teachers might be less confident. This in itself, though, may be a motivation for professional development. Both of these situations are relevant to this study (see Section 5.2).

## 2.5 TEACHER LEARNING AND THE ROLE OF OTHER PEOPLE

Because much has been written in the area of teacher learning, and because the interviewees discussed with enthusiasm the nature of their learning and the role of others, and how learning impacted on their subsequent careers, I include this area in the literature review.

Teacher learners may have, albeit subconsciously, theories and beliefs about aspects of teaching and learning drawn from their own educational experiences. Pre-service teacher trainees bring with them thousands of hours of sitting at the pupil's desk: the '*apprenticeship of observation*' (Lortie, 1975). In-service EFL teachers bring not only this apprenticeship of observation to the training room but also the thousands of hours they have already spent teaching English. As one of the characteristics of adult learners is that they build on and reflect on their experience (Tusting and Barton, 2003), it would seem beneficial to exploit this understanding on a Diploma course using an appropriate teaching approach, rather than operate a knowledge transmission model. Tusting and Barton (ibid, p36) conclude that, rather than content transmission, '*The learner's contexts, purposes and practices are the most important actors in the process*'. This view of adult learning is significant to the Diploma study.

### **Personal, practical, tacit knowledge**

The '*personal, practical knowledge*' (Clandinin, 1985) that teachers bring to the Diploma course contrasts with the '*public theory*' (Griffiths and Tann 1992, p2) which they encounter during the course. Griffiths and Tann state that these concepts equate with the commonly used terms 'practice' and 'theory', and that the '*assumed divide between theory and practice is false*' since they are both forms of theory (ibid, p2). Eraut uses similar terms: '*public*' and '*private theories*' (1994), and, perhaps the clearest and most convincing of all the terms, '*codified knowledge*' and '*personal knowledge*' (2000), reminding the reader that the latter may be either explicit or tacit (2000, p114).

In a constructivist view of learning, pre-existing knowledge within a teacher's head plays a role in any new learning context, as new information is interpreted in relation to existing schemata (Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Williams, M., 2003). Data from the interviews in the present study

suggest that the teachers integrated new knowledge with existing experiential knowledge, building more complex schemata. It is possible to theorise that their thirst for new knowledge and their readiness for the course in career terms, together with the intensity of the course experience itself, helped to anchor the new knowledge more strongly and integrate it more thoroughly, resulting in greater enthusiasm, confidence, and ultimately, a stronger and deeper impact on their teaching (see Chapter Four).

In order to integrate new and existing knowledge, it is important to explore and make explicit personal theories (Williams, M., 2003; Williams, R., 2005; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Singh and Richards, 2006; Lamb, 1995; Roberts, 1998; Pennington, 1990) so that the personal theories can be '*scrutinised, challenged, compared to public theories, and then confirmed or reconstructed*' (Griffiths and Tann, 1992, p14). Griffiths and Tann state that personal and public theories should be regarded as '*living, intertwining tendrils of knowledge which grow from and feed into practice*' (1992, p3), a view which suggests a level of equality, complementarity and linkage between the two forms of knowledge and which ties in with Eraut's view (1994) that knowledge needs to be put into practice in order for it to serve a purpose. These ideas are particularly significant in Chapter Five.

These ideas would seem consistent with a developmental, rather than training, view of teacher learning. Richards defines a training perspective as a '*specified set of teaching practices and competencies*' which can be '*taught and tested*' (1998, pxiv), and suggests that a developmental perspective is more holistic and is '*built on the notion of the teacher as critical and reflective thinker*' (ibid, pxiv). He argues that teacher education should focus on exploring the '*knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and thinking*' (ibid, pxiv) that underpin practice, rather than aiming only at training. The extent to which these perspectives can be mapped onto the TEFL Diploma experience, as reported in the data, is discussed further in Chapters Four and Five.

### **Situated learning**

Personal, practical, tacit knowledge is developed through practice within a given situation, a process which relies on a theory of learning as 'situated' within a community of practice and



practitioners, as suggested by Wenger (1999, p7). Lave and Wenger regard knowledge not as the acquisition of propositional knowledge (1991, p33), but as developing contextually, for example as teachers respond to the specific contexts in which they work. Participating within a community of practice engenders learning, as newcomers '*move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community*' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p29), and, rather than being abstract, knowledge is gained and used in specific circumstances (ibid, p34). Tusting and Barton's view of adult learning as being '*present in a dialectical interaction between individual, situational and social factors*' (2003, p36) is similar. These ideas are relevant to the TEFL Diploma study because Diploma participants have learned about teaching through the practice of teaching in specific contexts.

The notion of a community of practice, however, is also relevant to the Diploma course itself, as well as the pre-course teaching context. Singh and Richards (2006) argue strongly in favour of a sociocultural view of the (in-service) 'second language teacher education course-room' as a community of practice where teachers learn, not through absorbing knowledge and applying it in assignments or in their practice, but through engaging with each other in activities and discourse. They propose that within this community teacher learning and teacher identity can be mediated through modelling, scaffolding and a suitable course-room atmosphere, drawing on resources such as course content, course artefacts and previous experience. These concepts are highly relevant to the Diploma study and its findings.

### **Experiential learning**

Experiential learning is one way of integrating new and existing knowledge within a given situated context. The EFL teachers in the present study show a strong preference for interactive, experiential learning, an approach consistent with Tusting and Barton's views (2003) of adult learners. Kolb (1993) emphasises the central role of experience in the learning process; the Diploma follows this model and is potentially rich in experiential learning, as 'experience' appears in many forms. Kolb states (1993, p148) that effective learners need four different kinds of abilities: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Although Kolb is talking of learning generally,

this model seems to be particularly pertinent to professional learning; if a DELTA course can provide opportunities for teacher learners to exercise and develop all of these abilities at different times, this suggests a holistic, comprehensive and potentially very fruitful learning opportunity.

### **The importance of peers/colleagues**

As part of the community of practice, peers and course colleagues can play an important role in the construction of new knowledge (Singh and Richards, 2006), implying a social constructivist form of knowledge development. Elmore (2000, p47) claims that exposure to training alone is unlikely to modify teachers' practice, that the training also needs external structures in the form of social and professional networks and relationships to support teachers, such as mentoring. This resonates with Day's point (1999, p205) about CPD needing '*extended critical engagement with peers and others*' and Eraut's notions of co-operative learning and the roles of co-learners, i.e. to '*bring different knowledge and perspectives, ... share burdens of finding, scanning and degutting learning resources... providing mutual psychological support and motivation*'. (1994, p13). Dadds also emphasises the scaffolding functions of 'sympathetic others' during professional development experiences, and the possibilities of '*exchange, critique, exploration and formulation of new ideas*' (1997, p36). The role of other teachers is perhaps particularly significant to the TEFL Diploma as many EFL teachers have moved around in their careers and some may have worked in remote locations with few local networks. The TEFL Diploma provides the opportunity for them to share very diverse experiences and to discuss teaching with like-minded professionals.

### **The importance of course tutors**

Course tutors also play an important role in a TEFL Diploma course. If teacher learners are to become more aware of their existing knowledge, one of the course tutor's roles is to '*help them join the bits up*' (Williams, M. 2003, p3), a task which challenges tutors' skills, personality and views of learning. Williams claims a need for a methodology which can help trainee teachers to construct their own understandings of new knowledge and which encourages them to be autonomous and take control of their own learning (ibid, p7). However, I would go further

and say that, particularly with *in-service* training courses such as DELTA where trainees' 'baggage' is heavier, and therefore the potential for learning and impact greater, there is a need not only for methodology which can allow this, but for course tutors who can facilitate this.

Little appears in the literature about course tutors, but, unexpectedly, the interviewees in the present study had much to say. Material appears in the literature with regard to what they should do, the type of provision they should offer (e.g. Roberts 1998), but less about the skills they should possess and less still about the characteristics they should demonstrate. The trainer qualities valued by Freedman's informants in the TEFL Diploma study (1985, p166) were enthusiasm, commitment, responsiveness to trainee ideas, self-critical awareness and the ability to stimulate discussion. Literature in the area of humanistic psychology and counselling may offer further suggestions (e.g. Carl Rogers' core conditions of congruence/genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and empathy, quoted in Corey 1991, p207). Roberts (1998), writing in the area of language teacher education, accepts that it is essential for teacher learners, particularly in a context of change, to feel valued and accepted for who and where they are, in terms of affective and emotional, as well as cognitive factors. He nevertheless questions the relevance of therapeutic orientations; the data in the present study, however, suggests that the trainees valued characteristics in the course tutors which equate to Rogers' core conditions, and appeared to criticise those which did not.

One such condition outlined above, congruence, does have some echoes in teacher education writing, particularly in the area of trainer modelling. Singh and Richards (2006) strongly advocate that the training style should mirror the trainer's principles. Freeman, when discussing the problem of transfer in teacher education and the process of change from knowing into doing, makes clear that the 'how' is as important as the 'what' (1994, p16). Modelling may take the form of providing interactive teaching, as this is often what is expected of the trainees themselves. Gaudart's students (1994, p90), for example, although pre-service TESL trainees, preferred their trainers to use 'practical' and interactive methods, as opposed to lectures.

If knowledge is to be constructed within a situated learning context, rather than transmitted by the course tutor, the tutor, as well as modelling teaching, also needs to be able to scaffold the development of course participants, as '*cognitive development is a socially mediated activity*' (Johnson and Golombek, 2003, p730). This takes a Vygotskian perspective, with the apprentice and the expert working together (Vygotsky, 1978).

## **Supervision**

Supervision is another aspect of the Diploma tutor's tasks. Giving feedback after assessed lessons is a delicate situation and needs careful handling, as it can de-stabilise some trainees, particularly if they are already serving teachers. The level of teaching experience and competence a teacher has may also be a significant factor; Berliner (1994), discussing the five main stages through which teachers pass, writes that from the competent stage onwards teachers '*often feel emotional about success and failure in a way that is different and more intense than that of novices or advanced beginners*' (ibid, p7). This suggests that more experienced Diploma candidates whose teaching does not meet observer expectations might find feedback sessions difficult. If the process is handled sensitively and the interventions appropriate, however, it can provide a fruitful learning opportunity.

Little is written about assessing in-service teachers for qualification purposes; literature dealing with serving teachers usually refers to quality control, appraisals, assessing/aiding developmental needs, or peer observation. However, Randall and Thornton (2001) include a page on 'Private sector TEFL Diploma courses'. They describe the informal atmosphere of TEFL courses and the '*hands-on, highly practical approach to learning about teaching*' (ibid, p16), suggesting that, in this democratic and egalitarian context, humanist and reflective approaches to supervision may be appropriate.

Bailey (2006), also writing in the field of language teacher education, outlines a number of supervisory styles, and supports the view, which is in accord with Randall and Thornton above, that a reflective model is more suitable for in-service teachers than a prescriptive model because it supports their classroom decision-making processes. In this model the supervisor

*'guides critical consideration of teaching purposes, procedures and consequences'* (Goldsberry, 1988, p9, quoted in Bailey, 2006, p275). A reflective model would seem to sit well with DELTA since the list of individual competences for teaching practice (against which tutors assess candidates) includes criteria such as being able to reflect on one's strengths/weaknesses.

Freeman (1982) puts forward a hierarchy of teachers' needs for different types of supervision throughout their careers, and suggests that, for experienced teachers, the models *'observer as provider of alternative perspectives'* and *'observer as understander'* are useful. Convincing though this hierarchy is and useful though it is for teacher development, it still does not fit the conundrum of the DELTA, where teachers are experienced but where teaching is nevertheless being given summative assessment and graded according to a list of competency criteria. Gebhard's creative approach to supervision (1984), which allows a combination of different approaches during any post-observation feedback session, would seem to be the most flexible, since in-service EFL teachers bring a range of different strengths, needs and experience to these sessions. There is no single supervisory style which suits everybody at all times.

## **Mentoring**

Possible solutions which may help to address the dilemma between assessment and development of teaching would be to provide opportunities for: observation and feedback on teaching which is *not* evaluated (Gaudart, 1994); trying new ideas out in safe environments such as micro-teaching (Hayes, 1995); doing teaching practice which is *unsupervised* (Brandt, 2006); and mentoring (Randall and Thornton, 2001, p14). Butcher (2000) refers to three main views of mentoring: as coach, where the mentor helps a pre-service teacher to meet the required professional competences; as mentor in a longer, more reflective, developmental process; and as a *'framework of positive support by skilled and experienced practitioners to other practitioners who need to acquire complex new skills'* where the less experienced teacher is helped by *'collaborative teaching, modelling, observation and discussion'* (Butcher, *ibid*, p97). The first of these models is not relevant to the Diploma context, the second is possible if a Diploma participant is studying part-time and has access to this help in the

workplace, but is particularly suitable in the post-Diploma phase where the teacher is moving towards expert status (Berliner, 1994). It is during the course, however, that the third model comes into its own. The scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) and support and challenge (Daloiz, 1986) that an experienced teacher provides can be invaluable in shaping and stimulating a Diploma candidate's development. Not all Diploma courses have such schemes, however, and where they do, not everybody at the host institution is enthusiastic about or able (Brooks and Sikes, 1997) to take on the role. Training for such roles is important (Malderez and Bodoczky, 1999) but is all too often patchy (Hobson, 2002).

## **Summary**

This literature review has covered a range of areas: a comparison of TEFL with other educational contexts; a discussion of impact and impact studies; an investigation of pre-course factors such as motivation and previous teaching experience; and an exploration of the area of teacher learning, including the significance of other people to teacher learning and development.

A number of different writers made an important contribution to this Diploma study. From Nias (1991) I gained the original stimulus to investigate teachers' retrospective perceptions of a teacher education experience, the overall focus of my study. Reading Harmer (1988) and Bennett (1999) provided reassurance that accessing past memories as part of a research study was possible, and from writers such as Burchell et al (2002) I learned that this is a valuable process. From Day (1999) I formulated the research question about readiness/motivation to learn within the context of a teaching career, and from Ryan and Deci (2000) I learned something about the complex psychology of motivation which I used as a framework to interpret motivational factors in the interview data. Mann (2005) provided a useful overview of writing in the area of language teacher development. Both Day (1999) and Eraut (1994) were invaluable sources with regard to teacher learning and a number of EFL writers such as Freeman (1989, 1992, 1994) and Roberts (1998) provided insights into what teacher education courses should include. Wenger (1999), Lave and Wenger (1991) and Singh and Richards (2006) helped me understand my data in the light of situated learning

within communities of practice, while Griffiths and Tann (1992) shed light on the interweaving of public and private theories of teaching, and of theory and practice. With regard to impact, Harland and Kinder's impact typology (1997) provided the inspiration for some of the interview questions. In addition, a number of writers who discuss the impact of professional learning and development, both EFL and non-EFL, such as Burchell et al (2002), Butcher and Sieminski (2006), Davies and Preston (2002), Hayes (1995), Knight et al (2006), Powell et al (2003), Prosser et al (2006), Waters (2006) and Williams, R. (2005), were influential in my delineation of impact and in the focusing, bounding and comparison of my study in relation to other studies.

In the next chapter I report the processes by which I investigated the research questions, providing details of the approach, the research methods and the actual process.





## CHAPTER THREE:

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 APPROACH

##### Qualitative, interpretive study

The over-arching question in this study is '*In what ways did TEFL teachers experience their Diploma course, perceived retrospectively?*'. This is divided into three sub-questions, which arose from the literature and the pre-pilot and pilot interviews.

**Individual decisions:** *What were their reasons for taking the course?*

**Learning experiences:** *What kind of learning experiences did they have, e.g. theory/ practice; role of other people; effect of f/t or p/t study?*

**Perceived impact:** *What impact did they perceive as a result of the course?*

These are perceptions, not objectively measurable facts. In order to understand these retrospective perceptions, it is important to try and understand the material from the teachers' perspective (Cohen et al, 2007, p21; Craft, 2000, p97). Understanding subjective human experience is the focus of the interpretivist paradigm of research (Cohen et al, ibid, p21), hence the approach adopted for the investigative procedure is interpretive.

##### Phenomenography

One research approach which falls within the interpretivist tradition of qualitative research is phenomenography. This focuses not only on the experience of a phenomenon, which characterises phenomenology, but on the '**differing** ways in which people experience, perceive, ... understand, ... various phenomena' (Marton, 2008, my emphasis, to highlight the contrast with phenomenology).

This research study focuses on the variation in TEFL teachers' perceptions of the Diploma and the range of different perceptions within the group, not the range of meanings for each individual (Akerlind, 2005), so it is a '*collective analysis of individual experiences*' (Akerlind, 2005). The main aim is not to find the '*singular essence (of experience), but the variation and the architecture of this variation in terms of the different aspects which define the phenomena*'

(Marton, 2008). Phenomenographic researchers believe that a phenomenon can be understood in a limited number of ways (Marton, 1988, p143; Brew, 2001, p274) and that the role of the researcher within this approach is to separate out this variation and then map the different relationships between these parts. Phenomenography, then, as well as defining the object of study, also has implications for the methods of analysis (see Section 3.5).

Early phenomenographic studies took place in the area of higher education learning and emphasised the interrelatedness of the process and the outcomes (Marton, 2008). This bears some considerable similarity to the TEFL Diploma study; analysis of the interview data suggests that there is a strong link between the impact and other factors present in the process of learning.

Because phenomenography is concerned with variations in perceptions of a phenomenon within a given group of people, I have taken a phenomenographic approach in aiming to identify the varying ways in which these teachers experienced the DELTA course. In order to identify these differences, I use a phenomenographic approach to analysing the data (see Section 3.5). However, this does not necessarily mean that the Diploma study is purely phenomenographic; I have taken Mason's view on research strategies: *'Strategy involves making decisions about every aspect of the research, in a very grounded way in relation to your research questions... Alignment with a 'big' position or philosophy is a different form of activity which is rarely helpful in planning research or in the research process...it is not a blueprint for it'* (Mason, 2002, p54). In other words, aspects of this study adopt a phenomenographic approach, and I show the variations in perceptions, such as variations in impact. However, I will also move beyond this in an attempt to theorise the links which may help to provide an understanding of impact in all its variations.

Hasselgren and Beach (1997, p195) state *'there is no genuine consensus method of phenomenography. Phenomenography is research which is simply concerned with how things are understood, the experience of the process of formation of understandings at individual levels, and their distributions in specific collectivities'*. Given that there is little consensus about

phenomenography, and I do not wish to ‘force’ the Diploma study into alignment with a philosophical blueprint, I will adopt a phenomenographic approach as far as it suits the study, but will diverge at a later point when demonstrating links between aspects of the findings.

**Insider research**

I have analysed my position vis-à-vis the research study using the concepts of insider-outsider as discussed by Hellowell (2006). I have done so because the study is a professional doctorate and therefore related to my own work. Also, in interpretivist research the researcher is a key instrument and transparency is therefore important. My position is nearer the insider end of Hellowell’s continuum, given my shared experience of both Diploma learning and teaching. On the other hand, I had no management or mentoring responsibility for any of the research participants during this study and the DELTA did not run in my workplace during the period of the research study. It is possible that in the future this may change.

**Insider**

- As an EFL teacher I have ‘*intimate knowledge of the community and its members*’ (Merton, 1972, quoted in Hellowell, 2006).
- I have been a DTEFLA student.
- I teach DELTA courses and taught four interviewees (see Section 3.4a)
- I knew some of the interviewees.

**Outsider**

- I was not researching my own institution.
- I did not know every interviewee before the research.
- I did not teach 16 of the interviewees.

Hammersley (1993) discusses the advantages and disadvantages (pp217-219) of insider research, some of which are relevant to my own situation. Familiarity is one major issue (Hammersley, *ibid*, p218; Kane 1985, p68). I believe that my knowledge of the course and my acquaintance with the terminology used in the field of EFL (Patton, 2002, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, p361: ‘*Know the terminology of the field*’) meant that time was not lost in the interviews by asking for clarification. Also, I had shared experience (i.e. the stress and intensity of a full-time Diploma course) and this helped to create rapport during the interviews, particularly when interviewees

were raising negative issues. The more interviews I did, the more I found this shared experience to be useful.

Familiarity with context, however, is not the only useful perspective. Measor and Woods remind the reader of the necessity to '*simultaneously know a setting and make it **unfamiliar***' (1991, p69, my emphasis), as does Hellawell (2006, p487). One disadvantage of familiarity, particularity with insider research such as the Diploma study, is the possibility of refraining from searching for depth and detail in an interview and instead taking things for granted. Making the familiar strange and maintaining some distance from the issues is important. At first I found this difficult, preferring instead to use my familiarity with the context and experiences to create rapport with the interviewees. As time passed, though, and I grew more comfortable with the interview process, I began to ask questions which yielded more information than if I had simply made assumptions about the meaning of comments because of our shared experiences.

### **Action research and life history research?**

Despite being insider research, this study does not take the form of action research ('a *self-reflective spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting*': Kemmis, 1993, p178). I have chosen not to investigate my own organisation, and have no brief to implement any findings. An action research model would not be appropriate for the research questions, since they are exploratory and not concerned with the cycle of implementation, reflection and further action. Also, whilst the topic of research is strongly rooted in my work and closely related to my professional activities, it is nevertheless divorced from my own work context and extends beyond the circle of my own trainees.

There are some elements of life history investigation in the approach I have taken; for example, I have asked '*What prompted you to take this qualification at that point in your life/career?*' and '*How has the qualification affected your subsequent teaching and career pattern?*'. However, it is not life history research in the manner of Nias (1991), for example, and this would not be the most suitable way to address the research questions. Nias (ibid, p149) was interested in 'a

*detailed and comprehensive picture of the subjective reality of primary teaching'*, in other words, the generality of teachers' lives and careers, and her longitudinal interviews were lengthy since they aimed to capture a number of areas. Whilst my research does investigate careers and life decisions, its focus is not 'the life or career of an EFL teacher'. Its focus relates to a particular period/event in the teachers' careers and their perceptions of the impact on their subsequent teaching.

### **Case study**

I have taken the topic of TEFL teachers' perceptions of the Diploma and investigated it as a case study. Merriam's definition is useful as a description of the intentions of this project: 'A *qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit*' (1988, p21).

Different types of research question lend themselves to certain forms of research. Yin (2003, p4-5) believes that one form of 'What' question, such as the main research question in this study on p39 (as opposed to the second kind which equates with 'how much/many') is exploratory and that case study is appropriate, although other research strategies may be equally so. However, he then goes on to state (ibid, p5-6) that case study is particularly useful for 'how' and 'why' questions (in this research study '*In what ways do TEFL teachers...?*' may equally well read '*How do TEFL teachers...?*'), which are more explanatory than just descriptive. In terms of scope, Yin (ibid), Merriam (1988), Gomm et al (2000) and Burgess et al (2006) emphasise the real-life context of case study, while Bromley's comment (1986, p23, quoted in Merriam, 1988, p29) is particularly pertinent to the TEFL study: '*Case studies get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can..., partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings and desires)*'. McDonough and McDonough emphasise that a case study is '*crucially concerned with an understanding of people's own meanings and perspectives*' (1997, p205). Case study therefore seems pertinent to the needs of the present study.

There are other reasons for using case study. It can provide an in-depth understanding of a particular problem or situation (Patton, 1987, p13; Hamel et al, 1993, p1; Merriam, 1988, p16; Gomm et al, 2000, p3). Researching teachers' perceptions about a significant form of CPD does require considerable depth; case study is appropriate when investigating how people understand themselves and their feelings and perceptions (Gillham, 2000, p7). Also, case study research is especially suitable when investigating individual differences (Patton, 1987, p19), a useful point, bearing in mind the phenomenographic approach to this research.

As this was exploratory work, I tried to embark on the research project with an open mind as to what I might find and not therefore with any preconceived ideas or hypotheses (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p431), as I believed this was the best way to elicit meaning from qualitative data. In this sense, the design was inductive; this implied the suitability of case study as a research design. Hamel et al go so far as to say that case study is '*the ideal inductive approach*' (1993, p41) and Merriam believes that most descriptive case studies are inductive. The nature of the end product also determines the research design, according to Merriam. If it is to be '*a holistic, intensive description and interpretation of a contemporary phenomenon*' (Merriam, 1988, p9) such as the present study, then case study is an appropriate tool.

### **The boundaries of the case**

The boundary of a case is one of its key features (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003; Merriam, 1988). A number of writers (Yin, 2003; Patton, 2002; McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Cohen et al, 2007; Bell, 1987; Merriam, 1988) have provided lists of possible units of analysis and stress that cases do not need to be human, but few include 'perceptions' in their list. Stake suggests (1995, p2) that people and programmes are often the focus of a case study, since they are specific. The Diploma study is looking at both people and programmes but with a specific perspective; it is investigating the experience of a Diploma programme through the eyes of previous graduates. In his list of units of analysis, Patton (2002, p231) has one very useful example: '*People who share a common experience or perspective, for example ...graduates*'. He also suggests that, in order to determine the unit of analysis, researchers ask themselves '*what it is you want to be able to say something about at the end of the study*' (2002, p229)

and one of his examples is '*findings about the different experiences of individuals in programs*'. Again, this fits very well with the focus of the TEFL study and also its phenomenographic approach.

The TEFL study has boundaries: it is focused on the DELTA course rather than the Trinity Diploma or the CELTA course (see Appendix One); it is looking at a small sample of experienced rather than pre-service EFL teachers; it does not aim to generalise about the efficacy of the DELTA, nor about the views of all EFL teachers regarding the DELTA, but to investigate individual perceptions of it, as limited by the sample. The views about the DELTA, when considered in retrospect by a small sample of teachers, therefore constitute the defined area of exploration in this study. The unit of analysis should bear similarities to previous research (Yin, 2003, p26). There are many research studies which report on perceptions of courses (see p20 above); for the most part their aim is to determine the impact of the course. My research investigates not only the perceived impact of the Diploma course but also teachers' general perceptions of the course in order to weigh up the possible relationships between these factors.

### **Types of case study**

One way of categorising case studies concerns the **purpose**. A number of different paradigms exist: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Yin, *ibid*, p3); descriptive, interpretive and evaluative (Merriam, 1988, pp27-29); intrinsic and instrumental (Stake, 1995, p3); and theory-testing, theory-seeking, story-telling and picture-drawing case studies (Bassey, 1999, p62). The main purpose of this Diploma study is intrinsic in that its aim is to understand this specific case, not to understand other cases (Stake 1995, p4). The research is partly descriptive and partly exploratory (Yin, *ibid*, p3). It is not seeking to explain why something happened, rather it constitutes a description and exploration of perceptions. To use Merriam's classification, the research is a combination of descriptive and interpretive (1988, p28). As a phenomenographic study, the research aims to develop conceptual categories, typologies and continua; however, it will also suggest possible relationships between issues and interpretations of phenomena. Bassey's paradigm allows for a combination: the study could be categorised as a theory-

seeking case study (akin to Yin's exploratory case study) embedded in a picture-drawing (or descriptive) case study.

A second classification of case study concerns the **design**. This study fits Yin's definition of a single-case (embedded) design (ibid, pp42-43); the over-arching single focus is TEFL teachers' perceptions of the course, but the embedded units of analysis are the individual teachers interviewed, gathered through sampling (Yin, ibid, p43). Merriam also states that a single unit can contain a diverse number of instances (1988, p46). See Section 3.4 for further detail on sampling.

### **Is it possible to generalise from case study?**

Generalisability can be a limiting factor with case study research since case study is chosen in order to study the particular (Merriam, ibid, p173). Gillham (2000, p12), however, says that the data is specific but that the theory may be usable by others. Gomm et al (2000, p4) point out that it need not be necessary to seek empirical generalisation; understanding the case in itself may be sufficient. Views on generalisability, or external validity, differ, but many writers agree that the concept needs to be translated into something which better represents the assumptions of qualitative research (Merriam, ibid, p174), as generalisation is often seen as a positivist belief (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Some of these reconceptualisations include 'petite generalisation' (located within the case study: Stake, 1995, p7), naturalistic generalisation (made personally by the reader: Stake, 2000), transferability and fittingness (the extent to which the context matches others: Lincoln and Guba, 2000), fuzzy propositions and fuzzy generalisations (something may happen but there is no measure of probability: Bassey, 1999, p46), reader or user generalisability (Wilson, 1979, quoted in Merriam, 1988).

All of these concepts are relevant to this research study but the 'fuzziness' of Bassey's terms 'fuzzy generalisation' (less tentative) and 'fuzzy proposition' (more tentative) is particularly appealing since it '*carries an element of uncertainty*' (ibid, p52). An analysis of the perceptions of the teachers in this study suggests that there may be some relevance for the Diploma course in general, for example, but there is still an element of uncertainty. Gomm et al (2000)



also warn of the importance of determining the typicality and diversity of the case compared to the 'whole' population against which generalisations might be made, in other words, to make a careful decision about sampling. Regardless of the conceptualisation, I attempt to provide detail about the context and the methodological process (Schofield, 2002, p76; Merriam, 1988, p177), to allow informed judgements to be made about any relevance of the findings to other situations.

## **3.2 RESEARCH METHOD: INTERVIEWS**

### **Rationale**

The exploratory nature of the study influenced the data collection, since a method was needed which allowed for individual perceptions to come to the fore, unforeseen issues to arise, and the freedom to discuss memories and feelings. For this reason, I chose qualitative interviewing, having found during a small MEd research project that it allows the researcher to enter into the respondent's perspective (Patton, 1987, p109), and is therefore congruent with the qualitative, interpretive approach adopted within this study.

The research study investigated opinions, which cannot easily be collected in other ways; lesson observation, for example, would not generate the type of data required to answer the research questions. Patton (2002, pp340-341) suggests that interviewing is useful when observation is not. Interviews provide the opportunity to: a) uncover attitudes and opinions as well as facts (Burgess et al, 2006, p72), particularly helpful in this study given the research questions which investigate attitudes and opinions; b) reveal perceived causal inferences (Yin, 2003, p86), a useful aspect since part of the research focuses on the impact of the Diploma and how/why interviewees perceive this impact to have come about; and c) explore situations in greater depth than is often the case with other methods (Edwards, J. 1991, p47). Since the specific information respondents would provide was unknown at the beginning, the opportunity that interviews provide to probe and explore unforeseen topics (McDonough and McDonough, 1997) was invaluable.

A further advantage of interviews, particularly over questionnaires, is their adaptability (Bell, 1987, p70; Powney and Watts, 1987b, p9). An interviewer can follow up interviewees' ideas by asking them to clarify and elaborate on their responses. Gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice can also be observed and pursued in interviews; these aspects are lost in written questionnaires (Bell, 1987, p70). It is the richness of communication available through interviewing (Gillham, 2000, p62) which is one of its main strengths.

In contrast to other forms of data collection, for example, questionnaires, Gillham (2000, p62) suggests that interviews are used when: a) there is a small number of people involved, such as there are in this project; b) they are accessible; c) they are 'key' people and can't afford to be lost; d) when the questions are open; and e) when the material is potentially sensitive. This research project fitted all of Gillham's five criteria and therefore used interviewing as the means of data gathering.

Another reason for the choice of interviews concerned the retrospective nature of the investigation and the fact that it depended to a large extent on memories of the past. Several interviewees said *'Oh, I can't really remember much about my course'*, then proceeded to provide detailed, fascinating and very helpful data about a course they took many years before. A number made comments during the interviews such as *'I'd forgotten about that. As we're talking, it's all coming back to me'*. This data was generally not forthcoming immediately, however; it took a process of facilitated exploration. Talking about one image often sparked off other memories, especially with probing and exploration on the part of the interviewer, and these came flooding back to life. It is debatable whether a questionnaire, which does not carry the distinctive feature of live interchange at the point of data collection, would have generated the same vividness of memories and therefore the same quality of data.

Questionnaires do have the advantage of reaching a greater number of people (Drever, 1995, p2). However, although fewer people were interviewed in this project than might have been issued with a questionnaire, the depth of information gained in an interview compared to a

questionnaire (Drever, *ibid*, p2) is advantageous in this particular context, given the nature of the research questions.

### **Types of interviews**

Semi-structured, thirty-minute interviews were chosen for this EFL research study for a number of reasons. Given that the research questions investigated individual memories and experience, and the type of data required to answer these was in-depth, detailed, comprehensive and personal, then an interview approach which was able to deliver this seemed to fit the purpose best and provide the type of data needed.

The time constraints of small-scale EdD research, as well as the sole researcher, suggested that some structure within the interviews should be present, but the retrospective aspect of the Diploma investigation and the necessity of accessing sometimes distant memories pointed to the need to follow the lead of interviewees and talk about what was significant to them and what came back to mind at any given moment. Gillham (2000, p65) states that semi-structured interviewing is the most important interview type in case study research, and that if it is well-executed, it '*can be the richest single source of data*'. He claims (2000, p66) that, with practice and preparation on the part of the interviewer, a great deal of material can be forthcoming even from a thirty-minute interview, a claim which, after conducting all the interviews, I fully support.

As I wished to investigate individual perceptions, I did not include focus-group research. I felt that individual interviews would better access the power of spontaneous individual memories, whereas in a focus group these opinions or memories may be influenced by others, or shielded from others if felt to be minority views (Patton, 2002, p387). Patton also recommends that focus groups work best among strangers (*ibid*, p387), whereas in this study some interviewees knew each other while others did not. In addition, on a practical level, my access to the interviewees was on an individual not a collective basis and, in a busy TEFL summer, I needed to undertake interviews as and when it best suited each participant.

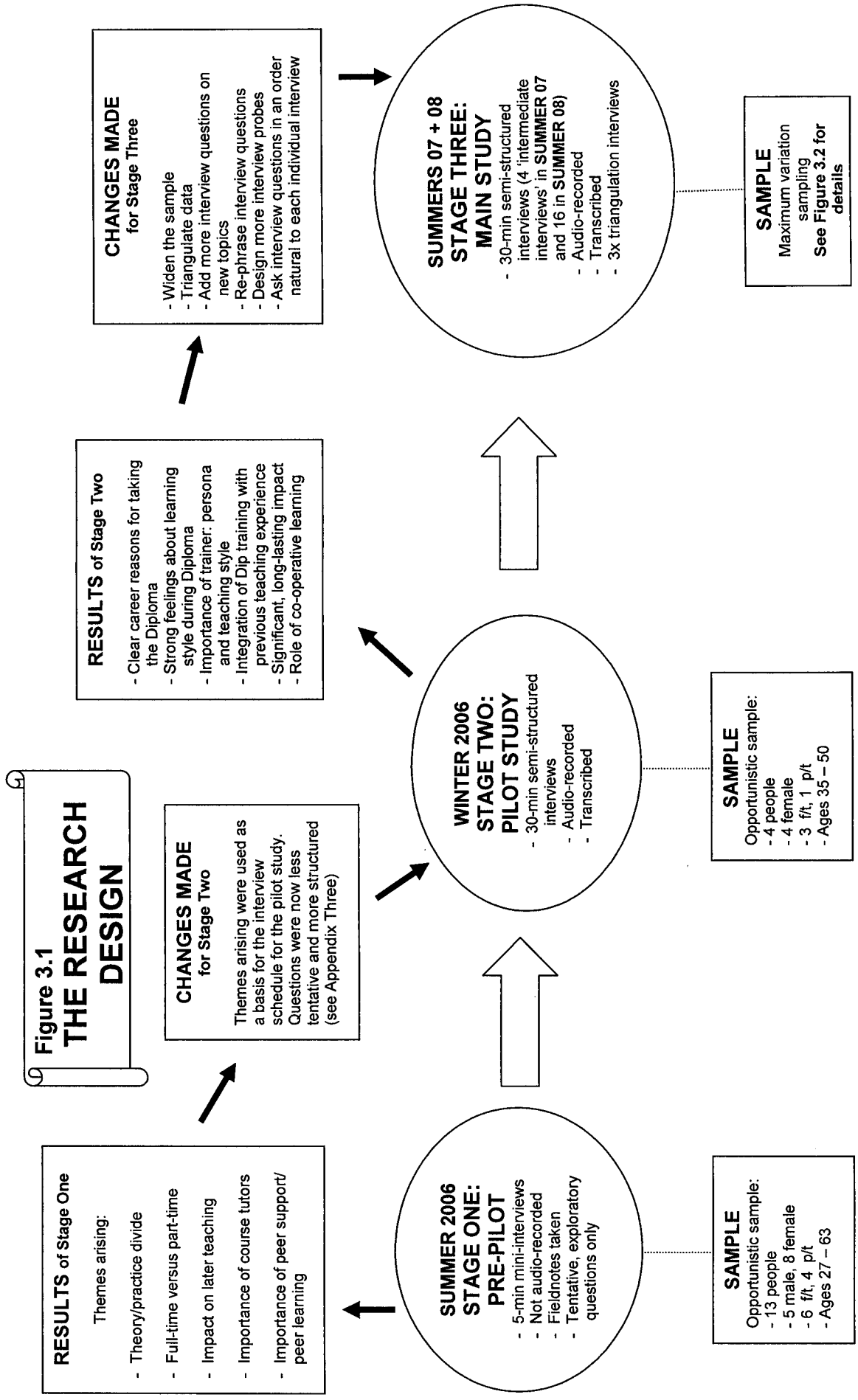
The semi-structured interview was also the tool of choice in several research studies investigating similar topics (Ayling, 1989; Inglis and Cope, 1992). Williams, R. (2005, p459) used loosely structured interviews with a list of themes and a list of prompts to make sure the respondents stayed with the themes. Burchell et al (2002) also chose interviews for their investigation into the impact of CPD on professional practice. Nias' study (1991, p149), which began as an investigation into the '*relevance and durability of their professional education*' also used interviews.

For details of recording and transcribing see Section 3.4 (p52).

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RATIONALE**

#### **Design**

The study was iteratively designed, i.e. there were three stages, the second of which built upon a close analysis of the findings of the first, and the third of which built upon the findings of the second. First of all, a series of five-minute, opportunistic interviews were carried out (**the pre-pilot**) and, following their analysis, changes were made and a further series of longer, more detailed interviews (**the pilot**) were held, with different teachers. Modifications were made to the design of the main study as a result of the findings of the pilot study. The main study itself comprised two separate but related parts: four 'intermediate interviews' and sixteen subsequent interviews. Again, the purpose of this was to create more 'building blocks' in which to test certain aspects of the process/content before undertaking it with another set of interviewees. In order to convey better the iterative nature of the research design, and to provide an initial overview of other relevant information, i.e. samples, timeframe, results and modifications, I have presented this in visual form in Figure 3.1 on p51. This also shows the fundamental significance of Stage One, the pre-pilot mini-interviews, to the whole research process.



### **Rationale: pre-pilot mini-interviews**

It was intended that issues emerging at this stage would further help to refine the research objectives (Mac an Ghaill, 1991, p107; Nias, 1991, p149; Bell, 1987, p72). The serendipitous opportunity of gaining data over the summer (the busiest time in the TEFL world with a seasonal return of trained staff to the UK) was similar to Patton's opportunistic, unscheduled 'one-shot' questions (1987, pp133-134), and was too important to miss. The themes arising (see Figure 3.1, p51) were taken as a basis for the interview schedule used in the pilot study, as envisaged in the iterative nature of the research design.

### **Rationale: pilot study**

The first purpose was to check the provisional concepts which had emerged from the pre-pilot and test these ideas once they had been phrased as interview questions (Measor and Woods, 1991, p71; Burgess et al, 2006, p78). It was also possible that the data which arose from trialling these ideas and questions might help to refine further the research questions (Mac an Ghaill, 1991, p107; Burgess et al, 2006, p78). It was also important to take the opportunity to try out different transcription techniques, test the analysis to check that the relevant areas were being covered (Powney and Watts, 1987b, p127), and finally to determine the overall feasibility of the study.

The data collection method also needed to be practised (Measor and Woods, 1991, p71; Powney and Watts, 1987b, p127; Bell, 1987, p70). This was an important point; as a relatively inexperienced interviewer, I was at risk, for example, of giving too much encouraging verbal and non-verbal feedback towards the beginning of the process (Powney and Watts, 1987b, p137). This gradually reduced throughout the series of interviews and, although I still gave feedback in the form of nods, smiles, 'uh-huh', etc, it became more neutral. I felt that some form of feedback was important; some of the interviewees knew me and would have regarded it as unnatural if I had remained silent or taciturn during the interview (see also p60).

## **3.4 THE RESEARCH PROCESS IN PRACTICE**

### **Sampling**

At the pre-pilot and pilot study stages, a pragmatic approach to sampling was taken, i.e. no attempt was made to recruit respondents fitting certain categories. Patton (2002, pp243-244) provides a comprehensive list of sampling strategies; his nearest category to my approach is 'convenience sampling' (ibid, p244) since I interviewed those people who were available at the time and to whom I had access. Although Patton judges that this '*yields information-poor cases*' (ibid, p244), I believe the results were more positive than this; the teachers all had varying lengths of post-Diploma experience in a variety of institutions, countries, cultures and continents. The data from both stages was rich. Everybody was more than willing to talk and some became quite voluble. See Appendices Two and Three for details of the questions asked at each stage of the study.

Although Patton (ibid, p244) states that convenience sampling offers the poorest rationale of all, the reasons were as follows: in the pre-pilot study, the interviewees were chosen for expediency, and in the pilot study because all were current or ex-colleagues and none had taken part in the pre-pilot interviews. One respondent (see p58) was asked because of her ethnicity (Indian), education (India and Zimbabwe) and teaching experience (mainly Africa); it was hoped that this would enrich and deepen the data gained from the pilot study. This corresponds to Bennett's (1999) justification for interviewing subjects from three different countries: '*The purpose of using three national groups was more for enrichment than for comparison of data* (1999, p159).

For the main study the interview sample was given further consideration and the interviewees were chosen to fit certain categories, i.e. maximum variation sampling (Patton, 2002, p234). In this way the sample was more representative of the TEFL teaching population, and variations can be more thoroughly described. Johnston, in his study of an ESL Masters Degree (1994) also adopted this approach.

Because of the retrospective focus of the research, and the need to determine the length and strength of impact, attempts were made to seek teachers falling into four sub-populations (see Figure 3.2, p54). Since the DELTA can be undertaken both part-time alongside one's teaching

commitments, and also full-time, and I thought this might be a significant factor in determining uptake of course content, both were included within the sample. Male and female teachers were also sought, in order to ensure the research covered as wide a population as possible.

As TEFL is widely practised both within the UK and abroad, I had originally envisaged the sample would be further sub-divided into UK and non-UK based professionals; this, however, would have placed the sample at risk of being too broad and the study therefore of too large a scale. The sample therefore concentrated mainly on UK-based TEFL professionals; some teachers based overseas were interviewed although not for purposes of comparison; again, this corresponds to Bennett’s reasoning (1999). Specific details of the sample are provided in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2: Interview sample of main study (total = 20)**

Gender of interviewees		Full-time or part-time Diploma course		Years since Diploma course			
Male	Female	Full-time course	Part-time course	1 – 5 yrs	6 – 10 yrs	11 – 15 yrs	16 + yrs
8	12	13	7	6	6	5	3

With regard to sample size, whilst Lincoln and Guba’s view, i.e. *‘to the point of redundancy’* (1985, p202), is ideal, it is somewhat ambitious for this project, given the sole researcher and time constraints. In enquiries similar to mine, Burchell et al (2002) interviewed two people whereas Ayling (1989) interviewed nineteen, so perhaps, as Patton says *‘there are no rules for sample size in qualitative enquiry’* (1987, p184). I chose to parallel Ayling’s study and interviewed twenty teachers, because on one hand I was aware that less detail from more people can help to understand diversity and variation (Patton, 1987, p184), but on the other I felt that the richness of data generated from the semi-structured interviews was more important and more useful than simply aiming to capture as many as possible.



It is important to mention at this stage that four of the respondents in the main study were my previous trainees. Given this situation, a degree of bias in the data cannot be ruled out. I took all the steps I could to minimise this risk, explaining beforehand that I was adopting a researcher stance rather than a tutor's perspective, that I was interested in hearing whatever they had to say regardless of the content, emphasising anonymity, confidentiality of information and the fact that any material disclosed would be used for research purposes only. In terms of work relationships at the time of interview, I was employed on a full-time, permanent contract at the same institution where three of them were employed on seasonal, hourly-paid contracts (one was employed elsewhere). For this reason, a power relationship of one sort was in operation, although I did not hold a line manager role in relation to any of them and we were not teaching the same courses or the same students. It is possible that during the interviews they might have said something they thought I wanted to hear, but they all attempted to delineate negative as well as positive aspects of their DELTA experience, and since the comments they made were extremely diverse, I interpreted this as minimal.

### **The interview questions**

Interview questions were based on themes arising in the pre-pilot and pilot, concepts arising in the literature, and also the research questions (see Appendices Two and Three). The Stage One questions were more unstructured, as I was unsure at this stage what would be forthcoming, but after Stage One they became more structured and specific. One of the advantages of the iterative research design, i.e. moving from open to more specific, and analysing a series of interviews at different stages of the process, is that the research design could be honed until it was more efficient and fit for purpose, and also it provided further guidelines for the literature review and emerging themes.

The interview questions were supplied prior to the interviews, the aim of which was to provide interviewees with thinking time, particularly important when dealing with questions relating to an earlier life period (Ayling, 1989, p78). In each interview it was apparent that people had considered their ideas carefully prior to the interview.

## Probes

Probes were used for short or vague answers (Kane, 1985, p68-69), also in order to enhance the depth of information (Patton, 2002, p372), indicate to the respondent the appropriate level/depth of answer (Patton, *ibid*, p372), and because they helped maintain the flow of the interview (Patton, *ibid*, p374). Listening to the pilot interviews helped to highlight occasions when a probe might have elicited more specific information; I then used these with greater consideration in the main study.

## Recording

I audio-recorded the interviews (using a tape-recorder), rather than taking notes during the interviews, because I wished to record the words verbatim and analyse later, rather than begin the process of analysis during the interviews (Walker, 1987, pp234-235). Powney and Watts (1987a, p358) state that '*People are likely to respond differently when their comments are tape-recorded*'. EFL teachers, though, are all familiar with recording as a daily part of their work; none appeared perturbed when I asked if I could record the interview and nobody seemed at all intimidated by the recording process. I did not record the pre-pilot mini-interviews since some were impromptu and held in locations not conducive to recording, but took fieldnotes instead.

## Transcribing

I transcribed all the interviews myself, an arduous task but one which gave me considerable familiarity with the content and which was itself an important learning process. There are different options regarding transcribing: transcribe verbatim but this can make the reading more awkward (Riley, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 1996, p24); tidy up features such as pause lengths, overlapping utterances or reformulations, which can render reading easier but this might obscure important data (Silverman, 2001, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, p163); transcribe the main points which are necessary for analysis (Patton, 1987, p138).

Having considered the options, I chose in the pilot study to test whether partial transcription was as effective as full transcription, so one pilot interview was fully transcribed and the others

tidied up along the lines of Silverman (ibid), i.e. all the points were transcribed but overlapping, reformulations and fillers were not. Neither were structures such as '*there were...*', '*we had...*', '*it was...*', or the specific wording of the questions. I found partial transcription to be as useful, if not more useful, than the fully transcribed version since, when reading and analysing the scripts, this allowed me to focus on the actual points made in the interviews rather than be distracted by extra words. Also data was available from both types and sufficient was transcribed for this not to appear a problem. If a respondent had particular difficulty, however, in answering a certain question and there were lengthy pauses and attempts at reformulations, I marked this as important since it helped to highlight those questions which needed to be re-written for further interviews. For the main study, I chose to use partial transcription but included the full wording of the questions since, in some instances, it had been necessary to listen to the recordings again to retrieve this information.

### **Interview location**

I offered those interviewees not working at my own institution the option regarding location, i.e. their workplace, my workplace or a neutral location of their choice. I asked those working at my own institution (the majority of whom were on seasonal contracts and would return to their own workplaces during the academic year) whether they would be willing to be interviewed at work, given that we were all extremely busy during the summer school, typically the busiest time of the TEFL year. They willingly agreed and I chose little-used classrooms where there would not be any interruptions, and the interviews took place after teaching hours. One chose to be interviewed at home.

### **Ethical considerations**

Burgess et al (2006) mention the concept of transparency and openness in the research design (ibid, p33), and also the relationship between the researcher and the researched (ibid, p35). Given that the current study is insider-research, and that I am therefore very much 'involved' in the topic, I felt it was important to be open with the respondents in terms of the research focus and research questions in an attempt to avoid deception, one of Bryman's four principles of ethical concern (2001, referred to in Burgess et al, ibid, p31).

One negative aspect of my role as DELTA tutor is that participants may have thought I was taking a tutor's perspective. I tried to be open about my perspective, partly through an introductory letter about my research interest (Appendix Four) and partly by trying to ask questions from a researcher's rather than a tutor's point of view. At the beginning it was difficult to cast aside the tutor's mantle but it became easier as time progressed. I also tried to ask participants for more clarification rather than always assume that my insider knowledge provided insight into the meaning of everything they said.

The choice of qualitative interviews as a research method may also carry ethical implications, since it may reflect the belief that interviewees have *'more freedom in and control of the interview situation than is permitted with 'structured' approaches'* (Mason, 2002, p66), a view which mirrors my own. Equally, since I believe that, for the purposes of the research focus, qualitative interviewing generated a fuller picture of individual perspectives, this was fairer from an ethical point of view. The fact that four interviewees thanked me for the chance to explore their memories and feelings about their Diploma bears out this view. Perhaps the fact that I was an insider helped them to feel safer in their exploration. One interviewee reported, for example, that a fellow participant had committed suicide soon after the course and believed that the person's mental stability had not been helped by the stress of an intensive DELTA course. Although we digressed at this point into a brief discussion of this sad situation, I did not need to ask the interviewee for an explanation of why this might have happened because of my prior knowledge of the intense stress some people suffer during the course.

Relationships can create other ethical issues. One younger, Indian respondent brought up the issue of background in connection to the DELTA. It is theoretically possible that certain power issues existed in this interview relationship, but unlikely; this participant had been a long-term colleague of the researcher in a peer position, the person had worked in a wider range of teaching contexts internationally, and, at her choice, was interviewed at home.

Informed consent prior to interviewing is another important issue (Mason, 2002, pp80-81; Patton, 2002, p407). My pilot interviewees consented to participating after being asked *'I'm*

*doing some doctoral research about people's views of their Dip course. I was wondering if you would be willing to be an interviewee?'* I then gave them the introductory letter and interview questions. At the beginning of the interview I reiterated the points from the letter and gave them a chance to ask questions. The letter is particularly important in terms of reassuring the interviewees, given the insider nature of the research and the fact that I already knew some of them.

Certain ethical issues also arose during the actual interviews. One pilot interviewee made negative comments, then later in the interview remarked *'I feel really bad saying these things because you might know these people'*. This person did not ask for the material to be erased from the record and did not appear to regret the comments; they simply expressed discomfort at having made things awkward for me. I reminded this person that anything said was confidential to my research role and would not be used in my other role as teacher/trainer.

Bearing this in mind, it was important to avoid an apparent conflict of loyalties for further interviewees, in accordance with Bassey's principle of respect for persons (1999), and Bryman's concerns of harm to people and protection of privacy (2001, in Burgess et al, 2006, p31). I therefore tried in subsequent interviews to emphasise anonymity and confidentiality, and highlighted my own perspective as researcher rather than tutor. I realised that, should sensitive material be discussed again, it was important to say *'Anything you say is confidential. I anonymise all the data and all the people, and disguise what you have said so that it is not possible for your identity to be connected with anything you said'*. This also has implications for the sample size; it needs to be large enough for responses to be 'hidden'.

### **Reducing bias: Order of questions**

Firstly, although I had planned to give each interviewee the questions in the same order, this did not actually happen, as I found it more 'conversational' to ask questions as the topic surfaced. The need to keep interviews as natural as possible is confirmed by Nias (1991, p149) who believed this would help in gathering the most useful information. This was substantiated in my experience of the main study where the data which arose from following the participants'

lead indicated quite strongly the need to ask the questions in the order natural to each interview rather than the order printed on the schedule. Despite the changing order, care was taken to ensure that all questions were asked.

### **Reducing bias: Phrasing of questions**

Questions should be clearly phrased (Cohen et al, 2007, p151) and expressed in such a way that they are not 'leading questions', particularly if the interviewer is familiar with the topic or holds certain views (Bell, 1987, p73). Questions can also become 'leading' if the responses are received with smiles and encouraging nods on the part of the researcher. My own initial awkwardness as an interviewer led to my giving smiles of relief when interviewees understood my questions and provided relevant responses. In later interviews I was careful to give a neutral acknowledgement and told interviewees that, although I was very interested, I was trying to maintain an impassive stance. I felt, however, that attempting to remain too 'objective' was itself not ethical: *'Le Voi argues that qualitative work ... cannot be done in an 'objective', neutral and/or disengaged manner if it is to yield any worthwhile insight into the informant's world'* (Le Voi, 2000, quoted in Burgess et al 2006, p35), especially as many interviewees knew me.

### **Respondent validation**

Proponents of phenomenography frown on respondent validation (asking interviewees to comment on the findings: Craft, 2000, p110) as a way of strengthening validity (Akerlind, 2005). They believe that the researcher is seeking to interpret the collective meanings of the pool of data, not meanings in isolation, hence it would not be appropriate to ask an individual interviewee to comment. In addition, they believe that perceptions are time and context-sensitive so may change. I chose to follow this practice and therefore did not undertake respondent validation, instead asking for feedback on my interpretations from *other* TEFL teachers, a method accepted by phenomenographers (see Triangulation on p61).

## Triangulation

For purposes of triangulation an attempt was made to access other data (Yin, 2003, p92) relevant to the potential outcomes of DELTA study. DELTA learning outcomes, as published on the Cambridge ESOL website, were reviewed in order to explore the official aims of the Diploma course. At a later stage I also interviewed two DELTA graduates who had not taken part in any of the previous interview stages, in order to check my findings with their own experiences (see p109, p133 and Appendix Thirteen).

## 3.5 DATA ANALYSIS: APPROACH AND PRACTICE

### Approach: Grounded theory

It was important to choose a method of analysis compatible with the research approach (Powney and Watts, 1987b, p158) and the research questions (Burgess et al, 2006, p83). As it was an exploratory study, the results were not predictable, even though as an insider I may have been able to predict certain things (but even an insider can, and perhaps should, be surprised by their discoveries). For these reasons, I took an inductive approach to designing the research and to analysing the data, i.e. the emergent themes and patterns came from the data, rather than being pre-conceived (Burgess et al, *ibid*, p47; Patton, 2002, p56). The inductive framework which best suited my approach was grounded theory, as discussed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), i.e. theory '*derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process*' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p12). Although the concept was first used by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the version I have used in this study derives from Strauss and Corbin (1998). However, grounded theory, although initially inductive, is also a deductive process. The inductive content analysis is later tested, and confirmed/refuted by further checking the data, especially to look for single instances and data that do not appear to fit the categories (Patton, 2002, p454). See p65 for further details.

Thomas and James (2006) have questioned the premises of grounded theory, problematising the notions of theory, ground and discovery, pointing out the difficulties of trying to abstract or distance oneself as a researcher doing qualitative research, and suggesting that the 'procedural machinery' (*ibid*, p791) of grounded theory is an attempt by qualitative researchers

to gain respectability within the wider research community, and that the resulting fragmentation of data can lead to the loss of the informants' 'voices'. To a certain extent, their arguments are convincing. As they demonstrate, the term 'theory' is indeed a minefield (Denzin [1994, p508] corroborates this, demonstrating that this objection long pre-dates the 2006 article by Thomas and James); something along the lines of 'argument', 'interpretation', 'narrative' or 'pattern' might be preferable. 'Construct', 'interpret' or 'suggest' are possible alternatives to the term 'discover'.

Nevertheless, I believe grounded theory still has something to offer. Thomas and James take issue with its terminology and 'rules' but fail to address fully the original aim, i.e. that the data is key to and source for any interpretations, and that these arise from being immersed in the data. Regarding their objection to the 'machinery' of grounded theory, coding text into chunks is actually a logical way of creating order out of the 'chaos' of qualitative interviews. As long as the stories of the original speakers are not lost (constantly going back to the data is a way of retaining these, and is a key aspect of grounded theory), and as long as the tools of grounded theory are seen as just that – tools rather than rules (Strauss and Corbin remind readers that their methods are not commandments [ibid, p3], and should be used flexibly and creatively [ibid, p14]) – then it is a useful means to an end. Its '*hankering after order*' (Thomas and James, ibid, p790), rather than being a negative thing, is a helpful framework which allows increased familiarity with the data and a description of the emerging concepts.

### **Approach: Phenomenography**

Given that, within a phenomenographic study, the object of study is concerned with the variation in perceptions of a phenomenon, it stands to reason that the analysis will involve divisions and separations: '*they are supposed to focus on similarities and differences between the ways in which the phenomenon appears to the participants*' (Marton, 2008). The different perceptions are sorted into '*clusters of ideas*' which go together (Brew, 2001, p274) and then organised into '*categories of description*' (Akerlind, 2005, p3). These are usually but not always related to each other in a hierarchical way (Marton, 1988; Brew, 2001), but the links are made clear (Brew, ibid) and have a logical relationship.



Phenomenographic and grounded theory approaches to analysing data are not mutually exclusive. I have interpreted phenomenographic analysis as meaning an approach to organising the data and its analysis, i.e. into categories and distinctions, and viewing every interview transcript within the context of the whole group rather than on its own, and comparing their similarities and differences (Akerlind, 2005). I have interpreted grounded theory both as a philosophical approach towards the data and also as a handbook of useful analytic techniques. Both approaches see the process as immersive, iterative and recursive, and both underline the discovery nature of the undertaking and the fact that findings should emerge from the data (Akerlind, 2005; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Indeed, Akerlind's key article on phenomenographic data analysis (ibid) reads remarkably similarly to parts of Strauss and Corbin's treatise on grounded theory (ibid).

## **The analysis in practice**

### **CAQDAS**

Mason (2002) and Patton (2002) provide a comprehensive outline of the possibilities and merits of CAQDAS (computer aided qualitative data analysis) packages, and, whilst this might have been relevant in principle and I recognise the advantages of such technology, I nevertheless elected not to make use of any such packages for a number of reasons. As a lone and relatively inexperienced researcher, I preferred the concreteness of handling everything myself in order to become thoroughly familiar with both the data and the process. I also preferred to follow and be able to justify my own analytical steps and to be in conscious control at each stage. In addition, there were practical reasons such as my limited prowess in ICT (and lack of time to become more skilled), the time-limited nature of the study, and the fact that the limited research I had previously undertaken was conducted in a manner more akin to this study.

### **Summarising**

The twenty interview transcripts in the main study comprised a corpus of c.68,000 words in total, with individual transcripts ranging from 2400 – 5000 words in length. First of all, following suggestions from Riley (1996, p50) and Mason (2002, p159), I read the transcripts through

several times until the content felt familiar. In order to focus my reading and to gain greater familiarity with the interviews, I constructed a brief summary of each (see Appendix Seven for example). This idea is borrowed from Riley (1996, p55), although she suggests starting the analysis process from the (longer) summaries themselves. I chose to make shorter summaries, but not to use them for the purposes of coding and categorising the data.

### **Categorising: open coding**

The next stage was to create 'indexing categories' (Mason, *ibid*, p159) or 'open coding' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). To do this I used highlighter pens to colour-code sections of the texts, making suggestions in the margins for possible categories. This practical technique was chosen because the colours provided at-a-glance indications of the nature of the comments, the volume and juxtaposition of certain comments in relation to others, and the existence of comments which did not fit into any of these rough categories. The latter were re-read and highlighted in order to be dealt with later.

Continuing the colour-coding with further interviews enabled the process of categorisation to be refined, expanded and confirmed, as each new transcript was studied (see Appendix Seven for initial coding of a transcript). The at-a-glance colour distinctions provided the opportunity for continual reflection on the data (the grounded theory approach) and on the categorisation of themes.

Once the rough categories were highlighted (see Appendix Eight for list of categories), comments of a similar nature were compared, both within and across the interviews. In the pre-pilot/pilot stages of the project, this was done by summarising the comments onto a handwritten grid, but with the much larger volume of data in the main study, this was not practical and was abandoned in favour of word-processed thematic documents. Akerlind, working within the framework of phenomenography, calls these '*decontextualised pools of meanings*', the advantage of which is to maintain the collective rather than individual focus (2005, p8). Marton (1988, p155) agrees, stating that individual boundaries are forgotten in favour of the pool of meanings. One danger in doing this, however, is losing track of the

original speaker and context in which comments are made (Mason, *ibid*, p158; Akerlind, 2005, p8). I labelled comments to avoid this risk and ensured the complete transcripts were easily accessible at every stage to check and re-read.

Mason warns of the dangers of missing out slices for all of the core issues (2002, p162) or of producing categories at an initial stage that are too specific (*ibid*, p163). I followed her warning and ensured that almost all of each transcript was colour-coded so that the issues appeared at least somewhere in the new, theme-based documents, and that the initial category names were broad and rough, such as 'impact', so that these could then be refined and sub-categorised. Using grounded theory meant constantly returning to the data, and this process helped to refine and sub-categorise the data.

### **Sub-categorisation**

The next stage was sub-categorisation, or 'axial coding' i.e. '*relating categories to sub-categories along the lines of their properties and dimensions*' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p 124). The category 'impact', for example, was huge as every interview contained substantial material on this topic. This was broken down, through reading and re-reading, into smaller sub-categories, such as types, length and delay of impact.

I then checked the sub-categories against further instances within the data (a deductive process also described in phenomenographic analysis: Marton, 1988, p155), looking for patterns, surprises, contradictions and single instances (Riley, 1996). In the manner of grounded theory I continually went back to the data, questioning myself, trying to see different interpretations, in order to let the data speak for itself. Even when writing up the findings, I continually sought refuge in the data for reassurance that the interpretations were fully grounded.

Consideration of possible points of bias was also important. With regard to the category 'Improving teaching', for example, one interviewee had been very negative about the experience of receiving feedback on observed lessons. The comments were so strongly

worded, and so different from my own experience as a Diploma student, that I wondered if it was in fact a single, 'maverick' instance. Re-reading this category, however, suggested that, while no-one else had been so vehement, there were several other negative comments on the topic, and it became necessary to confront my own bias and recognise that: a) not everybody had the same experience as myself; and b) there were both positive and negative comments about the same aspect of the course so I had to speculate on the possible causes.

### **Matrices and diagrams**

In order to discern patterns in my analysis of the data I spent some time constructing matrices and composite sequence analysis diagrams in the manner of Miles and Huberman (1994), cross-checking data in one category with that in another. Because there appeared to be some considerable impact from the course, for example, I designed a number of matrices and diagrams which cross-checked types of impact with other factors such as motivation, tutors, etc. These provided useful and interesting links and are mentioned in the findings chapters (p102, p107, p132, and Appendices Ten and Twelve).

### **Triangulation of analysis**

Some phenomenographic writers do not advocate coder reliability checks (Akerlind, 2005), i.e. a second researcher coding the same data. However, since I was the sole researcher involved in the TEFL Diploma study and felt that the reliability of the analysis would be enhanced by a second opinion, I chose to follow those who do. Therefore, at the beginning of the analysis stage, once the initial categories were established, I asked a critical friend to read the data in the 'impact' category and to draw a diagram based around the word 'impact', in other words, to separate out the different forms of impact that were embedded in the data. Although this diagram was done independently, it looked remarkably similar to my own. Discussions ensued which I believe helped to enhance the analysis, and which led to the resulting sub-categorisation (see Figure 4.1). This form of triangulation was also undertaken with the rest of the data (Patton, 2002, p464), and the results discussed at length as a type of dialogic reliability check (Akerlind, 2005, p12).

## Presenting the findings

Patton (2002, p439) quotes 'issues' as one of several possible approaches to organising and reporting qualitative data, suggesting that these are *'often the equivalent of the primary ... questions, for example, variations in how participants changed as a result of the program'*. I have chosen to structure my findings chapters around such key issues, beginning with 'impact' in Chapter Four. I have then followed this by building an argument around the possible influences on impact in Chapters Five and Six.

In the three findings chapters I adopt different approaches to presenting the data. Chapter Four (Findings 1) takes a phenomenographic approach to analysing, interpreting and presenting the findings; in other words, it concentrates on the group picture and lays out the variation of impact within the sample of interviewees. Chapters Five and Six (Findings 2 and 3), however, move beyond the phenomenographic presentation of group variation in impact, and explore further the possible linking factors which might contribute to this impact.

Although a phenomenographic approach to research prefers to emphasise the group as a whole rather than the individual stories, I have chosen throughout the findings chapters to source the interview quotations using pseudonyms in order to provide the reader with a sense of the individuals behind the quotations, and because I believe it is useful to be able to trace different features of the interviewees' stories in order to understand the points being made. In Chapters Five and Six I have highlighted certain interviewees whose stories are particularly illustrative of the points I make in these chapters. These vignettes also serve to remind the reader that within the group narrative there are separate individual stories.

I have assigned pseudonyms in preference to using letters of the alphabet, in order to enable the reader to find their way more easily through the narrative. The pseudonyms are randomly chosen and fictional and no details are provided which would allow the reader to trace the real identity of any of the interviewees. See Appendix Five for a list of the pseudonyms and how they relate to the different 'journeys' through the Diploma course.

## **Summary**

This chapter has described the setting-up of a qualitative, phenomenographic case study, exploring the perceptions of twenty TEFL teachers regarding their TEFL Diploma. Semi-structured interviews were the main research tool, conducted in a series of three iterative stages. Different aspects of the research process have been described, such as sampling, ethical issues, interview questions and logistics, data recording and transcribing, attempts to reduce bias, and data triangulation. The data analysis used a grounded theory approach and details have been provided on this process (further details are also given in Chapters Four to Six). The following three chapters present the findings of the study, the first of which deals with the perceived impact of the Diploma course, one of the research questions in this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS 1

### WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS COURSE HAVE?

#### Introduction

Chapter Four is the first of three findings chapters, and attempts to answer one of the three research sub-questions, *What were the perceived outcomes of the TEFL Diploma course?*, a question which relates to the work of researchers such as Burchell et al (2002). Although this question was the third of the three sub-questions (Section 3.1, p39), I have foregrounded it in the first findings chapter, because of the magnitude of the data, the weight of the evidence and the fact that it gained importance throughout the research study, since close engagement with the data showed that there were strong relationships between this third question and the other two.

#### 4.1 AREAS OF IMPACT

##### General impact

Cambridge ESOL sets great store by the DELTA:

*'DELTA is Cambridge ESOL's flagship teaching qualification, and is widely seen as setting a standard for the profession'* (Cambridge ESOL website).

As far back as 1985, Freedman's evaluation (1985, p252) concluded that *'The RSA Diploma stands in a class of its own...the scheme...designed to relate theoretical insights specifically to TEFL has no rivals'*. In general terms these claims were supported by the interviewees in the present study, many of whom thought that the course provided a good grounding in EFL teaching methodology and practice. The following comment comes from somebody who had a positive experience and cited a range of impact outcomes:

*'It broadened my skills, knowledge, everything... After DELTA you can walk into any classroom and do a lesson off the top of your head. I'd been told that. And I felt that I'd been given the tools to do that.'* (Olivia)

Even those who were more critical, and for whom the course had less impact, acknowledged the general value of the DELTA programme, for example:

*'I do feel that, whether you did the Dip part-time or full-time, ... you're probably a pretty safe pair of hands. You can be thrown into just about any situation without making a complete dog's behind of it.'* (Alex)

There appears to be some level of consensus about what the Diploma stands for and what it provides, and in Chapters Five and Six I explore the factors that might lead to this level of impact. This consensus about the impact and value of the course appears to contrast with Knight's (2006) and Knight et al's findings (2006) in studies of in-service higher education training. The former suggested that graduates of HE teacher training did not generally appear to have strong confidence in their Post-graduate Certificate, partly because they felt it was not held in high esteem, and both studies made the general claim that most professional education seemed to be non-formal rather than formal. This is not to say that the DELTA interviewees did not value non-formal learning, (one interviewee said: *'And then I learnt, of course, from teaching. That's how most people learn how to teach'*) but that the value attached to the Diploma in the TEFL world appeared to be relatively high in comparison with other contexts.

### **Specific impact**

In more specific, and phenomenographic, terms, a preliminary analysis of the data pointed to five main variations of impact: *practical; personal and psychological; propositional knowledge; organisational; aspects related to the TEFL profession*. No-one reported change in all of the five areas of impact, but everybody mentioned more than one area, sometimes also drawing a connection between different areas.

In order to make the analysis process more transparent, I show the specific items that the interviewees mentioned within each area in Figure 4.1 (p72). This also allows each of the five areas to be seen in relation to each other and makes the content of each area clearer. Within each of the five areas the specific items are listed according to the weight of data



corresponding to each particular point; in other words, the commonest issues are at the top of each list.

- Greater knowledge about different teaching approaches
- Better knowledge of workings of language systems in English, i.e. grammar, phonology, lexis, discourse
- Better theoretical underpinning for own practice
- Ability to provide rationale for own practice and think about 'why?'
- Increased knowledge of terminology
- Basic knowledge of syllabus design
- Basic understanding of second language acquisition
- Knowledge of historical development of language teaching

### PERSONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

- Changes in beliefs about teaching
- Increased confidence, general and specific
- Increased motivation about teaching
- Enhancing own professional identity
- Developing self-evaluation + reflection skills
- Changing one's persona as a teacher
- Better understanding of career stage
- Feeling that there is plenty of material and lots of mileage to 'ride on' for a number of years
- Dissatisfaction with post-Diploma job

### PROPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ASPECTS

- Getting the qualification
- Reading journals + resource books
- Attending conferences
- Learning to articulate about teaching/learning
- Helping to found teaching assoc
- Learning to direct own CPD + knowing areas for improvement
- Learning how to write better
- Understanding of 'bigger picture' of being a teacher

### In the classroom

- Using phonemic script
- Better use of resources, e.g. OHT, ICT
- Presenting self differently, e.g. standing/voice/calmer
- Better monitoring of student language use
- Teacher talk: clearer instructions; better graded language; clearer questions
- Better error correction
- Better board work
- More considered use of eliciting
- Giving students more time to answer questions
- More considered decision-making

### The learners

- Better understanding of student needs
- Structuring learning opportunities more systematically
- Students noticing difference in teacher before/after Dip
- Enhanced student confidence in teacher

## IMPACT

### ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS

- Promotion to better job
- Moving into teacher training
- Expanded role, e.g. syllabus/materials writing
- Giving workshops to colleagues
- More stable job contract
- Mentoring other colleagues
- Teaching higher profile courses/programmes
- More respect from colleagues + managers

### PRACTICAL ASPECTS

### ASPECTS RELATED TO THE TEFL PROFESSION

## FIGURE 4.1: Specific aspects of impact in detail

Firstly, the evidence of reported outcomes from the Diploma course suggests that this form of TEFL CPD has some considerable impact, particularly since teachers, reflecting years after the event, still recognise details of its impact on themselves and their teaching. This evidence does not appear to support the views reported by some writers that in-service courses have little effect (Roberts, 1998; Fullan, 2001; Freeman, 1992; Eraut, 1994), and appears to substantiate those writers who conclude the opposite (for example, Powell et al, 2003; Day, 1999; Inglis et al, 1992; Cope et al, 1992; Ayling, 1989; Bradley and Howard, 1992; Williams, 2005; Burchell et al, 2002).

Secondly, there are some clear parallels between the DELTA impact and Harland and Kinder's typology of outcomes (1997, see pp19-20 above). Regarding the potential effect of a *combination* of outcomes, the findings are slightly different. Harland and Kinder (1997) commented that affective outcomes need to go hand-in-hand with new knowledge and skills, if the effects are to be long-lasting. This is generally confirmed in the Diploma study since the large majority of interviewees talked of both outcomes, and claimed long-lasting impact. However, of those who did *not* mention affective outcomes, some nevertheless talked of long-lasting impact on their teaching. This suggests that other factors may be at work. The Diploma study also confirms Burchell et al's conclusions regarding a combination of outcomes (2002, see pp21-22 above), since more than half of the Diploma interviewees articulated this interplay. There were, however, some exceptions, as mentioned above. Therefore, although the study confirmed Burchell et al's findings, it is possible that in the Diploma study other factors combined to enhance or arrest developmental shift.

Bird et al (2005, p448, see p22 above) also suggest the potential of a combination of outcome factors, including a changed self-concept. The Diploma study partially confirms these findings in that those who specifically discussed a changed self-concept all mentioned other affective outcomes and changes in practice; there were, however, a large number of other people who also reported changes to their practice, but who mentioned affective changes *other than* a changed self-concept. Again, perhaps because of its context, there appear to be other contributory factors in this study.

Although this is a qualitative study, I believe it is useful at this (one) point in the thesis to provide some numerical data (Figure 4.2 below), since I feel it paints a picture of the relative scale of the issues and proportionality of the responses, and provides a flavour of these TEFL teachers' DELTA courses in relation to CPD in other contexts.

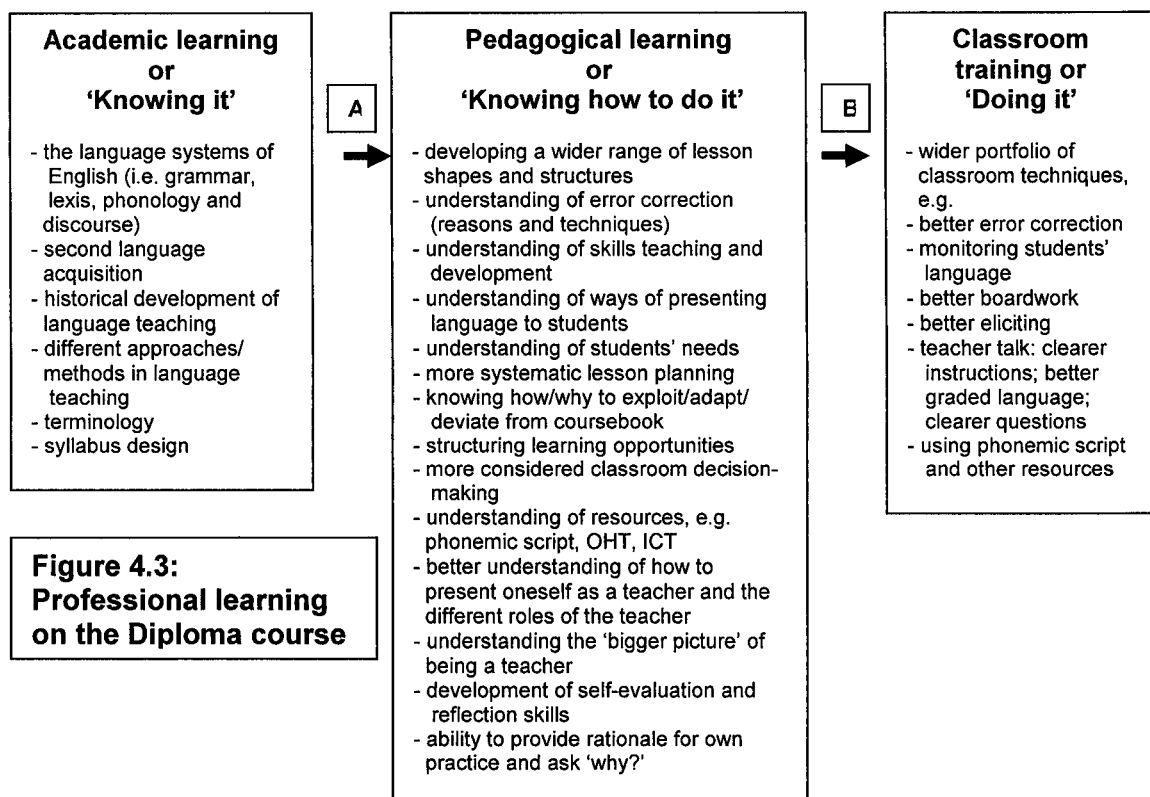
**Figure 4.2: The scale of each impact area**

Aspects of Impact	Number of people mentioning this area (n=20)	Number of different mentions
Practical	18	87
Personal and psychological	16	56
Propositional knowledge	13	63
Organisational	7	19
Related to the TEFL profession	6	22

It is clear that a large number of people perceived the course to have made an impact on their practical teaching and in the personal, psychological area. This ties in closely with Davies and Preston's study (2002) where the area referred to by most in-service students was teaching competence and confidence. The fact that increased knowledge was also mentioned by more than half of the Diploma participants above links with Powell et al's study (2003) where impact was taken to mean changes in knowledge, practice and affective areas. The fact that only a third of participants mentioned organisational and professional changes is discussed later in this section.

**Teacher learning**

Figure 4.1 (p72) shows all the Diploma outcomes. Re-reading Eraut's work on 'Characterizing the Professional Knowledge Base' (1994, p14), however, led me to re-analyse this in order to access those outcomes which relate to concrete aspects of participants' professional learning and development as EFL teachers (as opposed to more general outcomes such as 'attending conferences' or 'a more stable job contract'), in other words to access '*professional knowledge in its fullest possible sense*' (Eraut, *ibid*, p16). I then studied this professional learning data and sorted it into different types. For purposes of clarity and conciseness I present this in Figure 4.3 (p75).



Some interviewees had referred to the 'academic' side of the Diploma so I began with 'Academic learning' as my first category. This corresponds to Eraut's 'propositional knowledge' (ibid, p16) or 'knowing it'. Given that many interviewees talked of being shown how to improve aspects of their classroom practice, I also devised a training category, basing the definition of 'training' on Richards': *'a technical view of teaching which assumes that teaching can be defined in terms of a specified set of effective teaching practices and competencies ... such as lesson planning, ... techniques for effective questioning, eliciting, and giving feedback'* (1998, pxiv). The examples given in the third box in Figure 4.3 above suggest that aspects of the Diploma programme fitted a training perspective of teacher learning.

The remainder of the data related to 'learning about teaching' or 'knowing how to do it', hence I gave it the term 'Pedagogical learning'. This appears to comprise a considerable, and relatively wide-ranging, component of the professional learning on the Diploma course, and corresponds roughly to Eraut's procedural and practical knowledge, and skills, although 'Classroom training' above also includes skills.

Professional learning on the Diploma course clearly takes different forms and in this way diverges from degree courses such as those described by Ayling (1989), Powell et al (2003) and others in Section 2.3, since these studies report changes in academic and pedagogical learning, but not impact at the level of boardwork and eliciting. Phipps (2007), investigating a DELTA participant, does not report classroom changes either. Richards (1998, p14) examines the dimensions of second language teacher education and divides it into six domains of content: theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical reasoning and decision making, and contextual knowledge. Although the three-part division above does not correspond directly with Richards' division, Richards' areas can nevertheless be mapped onto the continuum above. Also, all of the learning outcomes above are represented within Richards' six areas (1998, pp14-15).

The three types of learning outlined above appear to be interdependent, hence the arrows in Figure 4.3 (p75). Some participants talked, for example, of a greater knowledge of the grammatical system of English enabling them to present new grammar to students in a more structured way; this is one example of academic learning supporting pedagogical learning (arrow A). Also, several people discussed how an understanding of error correction led to better error correction techniques (arrow B), an example of how pedagogical learning can be applied to classroom training. The interdependent nature of the three categories corresponds to Richards' *'interrelationships between ... dimensions of teaching'* (1998, p13).

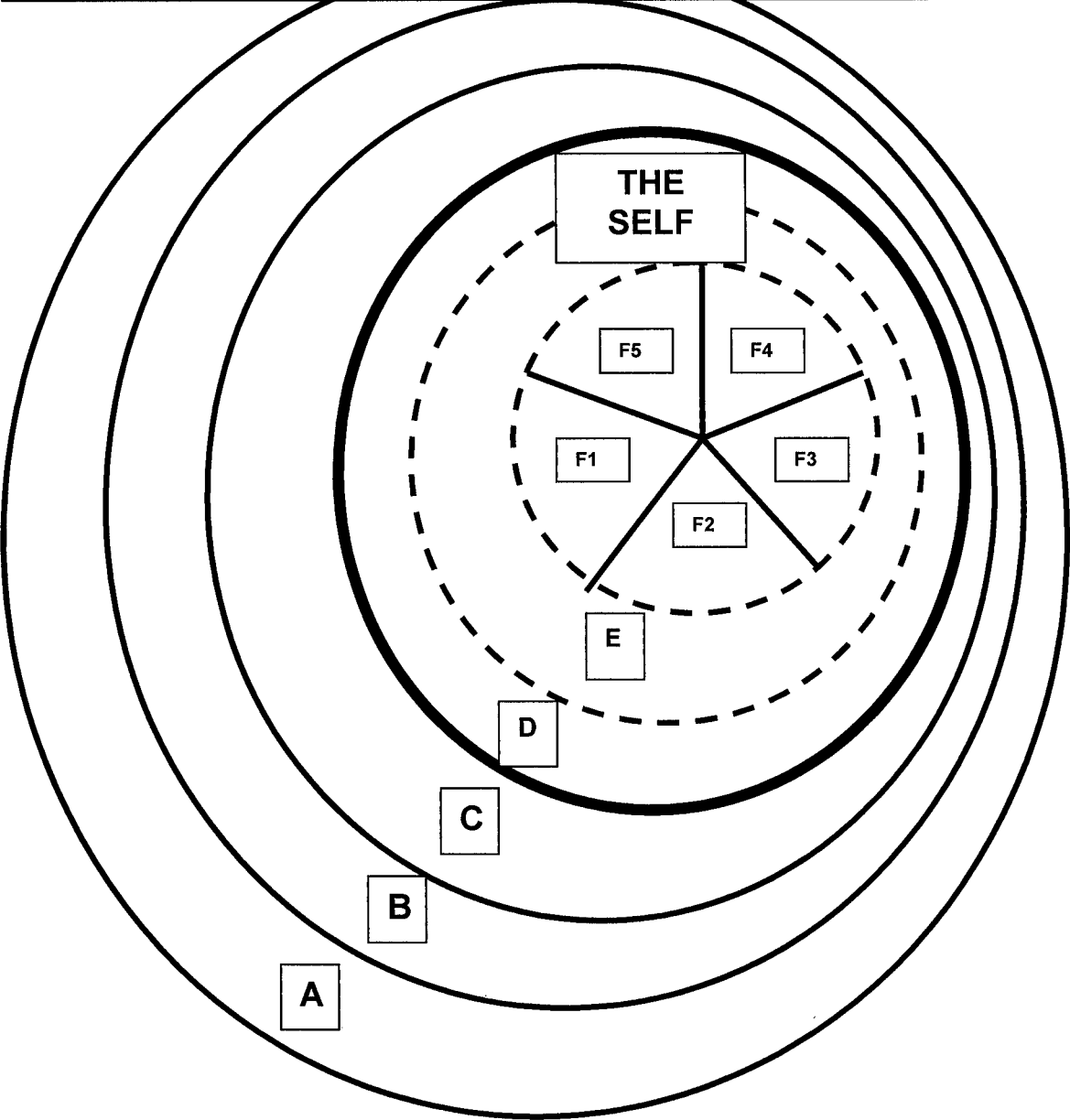
The linking of learning between one area and another, however, cannot come about without the personal and psychological developmental processes outlined in Figure 4.1 on p72. Interviewees talked, for example, of how increased confidence enabled them to try out unfamiliar teaching approaches such as task-based learning or systematic pronunciation teaching using the phonemic script. This bears out the points made by Harland and Kinder (1997), Burchell et al (2002) and Powell et al (2003) about the importance of a combination and interplay of outcomes. Changes such as enhanced confidence, and an improvement in skills such as critical thinking, reflection and self-evaluation, as well as being outcomes of the

Diploma course, appear also to be keys to the learning links and learning transfers in processes A and B in Figure 4.3 (p75).

## **4.2 DEPTH OF IMPACT**

Figure 4.1 (p72) showed the different areas of impact while Figure 4.3 (p75) represented the different types of professional learning. In this section on depth of impact, however, I approach the same data slightly differently, aiming towards a data-led understanding of deep or significant impact. I have classified the different areas or arenas in which impact was perceived to have taken place. A model of this is emerging (Figure 4.4 on p78), for which I am indebted to Butcher and Sieminski (2006) and their four-part model of the professional outcomes of an EdD Programme, as a springboard for the model below.

**Figure 4.4    Towards a data-led understanding of ‘deep’ impact**



**Arenas of impact A - E**  
A = Profession  
B = Institution  
C = Classroom  
D = Self: Knowledge  
E = Self: Confidence/Motivation/  
Enthusiasm/ Professional self-esteem

**F = The Inner Core**  
F1 = Changed beliefs/values  
F2 = Changed teaching persona  
F3 = Development of reflective skills  
F4 = Development of critical thinking skills  
F5 = Identifying the course as a key  
professional development experience

Butcher and Sieminski’s model features three different areas (Impact on: Wider Professional/Academic Community; Professional Colleagues; Professional Self) each of which is informed by and centres around Impact on Professional Self-esteem. Although each of these areas is represented in the model in Figure 4.4 above, the relationship between them



has been changed to reflect the data in the Diploma study. Below is an explanation of the different categories A – F. See Figure 4.1 (p72) for examples of each area.

**A. Profession:** For several people this meant learning to articulate about teaching and learning. This is important since it suggests the Diploma allowed teachers to become part of a discourse community and a wider community of practice (Wenger, 1999). One interviewee, Emily, described her feelings of ‘non-belonging’ before the Diploma:

*‘I think I knew there was something missing from the teaching I was doing. And from talking to other colleagues who were talking in acronyms, I’d think ‘What are they talking about?’ .... It was feeling like I needed to do something more’.*

This suggests that the motivation to do the course came partly from the wish to belong to the community of practice and was therefore partly socially constructed (Beltman and Wosnitza, 2008). See Section 5.1 (p95) for more detail.

**B. Institution:** Institutional outcomes (Harland and Kinder, 1997, see pp19-20 above) are perhaps less significant in the DELTA data since participants attending courses usually come from different establishments, so the impact in their respective institutions is less likely to be collective. Furthermore, the nature of TEFL (job transience, relatively high staff turnover, lower salaries in relation to mainstream contexts) could mean that outcomes are not viewed or exploited on an institutional level. Despite the different context, however, this mirrors findings by Knight (2006, p37), researching the impact of HE teaching certificates, that ‘*informants tend to cite evidence of impact on individual practices and the departmental dimension is hardly mentioned*’, but contrasts with the results of Prosser et al (2006, p3), also investigating HE teaching certificates, who reported evidence of programmes having significant impact at departmental level.

**C. Classroom:** See p85.

**D. Self: Knowledge:** All of the factors in this category (see Figure 4.1, p72, for details) are to be found in the DELTA Syllabus Specifications (Cambridge ESOL website) with the exception

of an increased knowledge of terminology. Terminology, however, is an important feature of professional learning as it has many implications. It is empowering since teachers are better able to read and understand professional literature. Also, as can be seen in this interviewee's comment, *'The course gave me names for the things that I do'* (Nina), terminology allows teachers to articulate about their practice. In this way, it is one of the passports to belonging to a community of practice (as mentioned in 'A' on p79). This is confirmed by Phipps (2007), and also by Freeman (1992); the latter argues in addition, however, that professional discourse is also a key way of rendering tacit knowledge explicit and therefore has a cognitive purpose in helping teachers to structure and expand their understanding of teaching.

**E. Self: Affective factors:** See Figure 4.1 (p72) for details. Increased confidence, one of the main affective changes mentioned by a high proportion of the interviewees in this study, is also an outcome in many other studies. Inglis et al (1992), Cope et al (1992), Ayling (1989), Powell et al (2003), Davies and Preston (2002), Prosser et al (2006) and the DELTA study by Phipps (2007) all mention greater confidence as one of the perceived outcomes of the programmes they were investigating. The aspects of confidence mentioned in the Diploma study included: confidence in existing practices; confidence to try out new techniques and approaches, such as task-based learning, the Lexical Approach, discovery learning, different forms of error correction; and confidence in one's performance as a teacher.

**F. The Inner Core:** While analysing the data in sections A - E, it soon became clear that there was a substantial body of data on self-reported impact which did not readily fit into any of the categories A - E described above, and which was more than just a 'residue' of data. Rather it was the opposite; it related to the impact of CPD at a level which was experienced as deeply meaningful to interviewees, in terms of their whole outlook on their role and sense of identity as teachers. For clarity and brevity, I have described this data collectively as the 'Inner Core' of impact. It could also be described with the ambitious term 'deep impact'.

What are the essential characteristics of deep impact? From the data I have identified three: a) it is **personal** (rather than detached); b) it is **fundamental** (rather than superficial or cosmetic);

and c) it is **sustained** (rather than transient). In effect, each of these aspects of deep impact is necessary; in other words, the impact is only deep if it is personal, fundamental and sustained. Each of the Inner Core factors F1 – F5 includes these three characteristics.

**F1: Changed beliefs and values** included aspects such as adopting new approaches to lesson planning and structuring learning opportunities in a different way. One interviewee, Joanne, said:

*'I loved the vocabulary. The Lexical Approach was totally me. I'm very lexical now, I've totally taken on Michael Lewis (a proponent of this approach). I teach in that way now, rather than foregrounding grammar.'*

This provides an example of an aspect of methodology which particularly appealed to one trainee whose immediate recognition of its relevance led to its wholesale adoption as an approach to teaching. Another trainee had a different reason for taking on a new approach:

*'I now believe that it's a good way to teach English, this experiential way of getting students to figure it out for themselves... So the approach used on the course has become a strong part of my own beliefs.'* (Olivia)

This person was clearly influenced by the tutor modelling an experiential approach on the course and decided that, because this worked as a learning model in the training context, it would be a very useful learning tool in the language classroom as well. Two points arise here, both of which are dealt with in more detail later: the value of discovery learning as an experiential learning tool (see Section 6.2, p119), and the power of tutor modelling as a teacher education concept (see Section 6.6, p132). A change in teacher beliefs was also an important aspect of Phipps' DELTA study (2007).

**F2: Changed teaching persona.** Several interviewees referred to feeling completely changed as a teacher as a result of the Diploma experience. Esther said *'I was drastically different after it'* while Sarah reported *'I felt like I was a different person in the classroom'*. This aspect was included in category F since it appeared to be more and deeper than simply increased confidence, additional knowledge or expanded classroom repertoire. Such dramatic findings appear to be rare in other studies investigating the impact of teacher development courses.

**F3: Development of reflective skills.** This included features such as learning how to evaluate one's own teaching and performance. Reflection may take place during the lesson:

*'It's made me more of a reflective practitioner ...someone who thinks about the classroom and learning...like I think in class 'Is there something else that could be going on, that I could be doing, to make their learning more successful?'*

(Nina)

In this case it corresponds with Schön's concept of *reflection-in-action* (1991, p50) and is consistent with Eraut's notion (1994) that self-deliberation is an important part of the expertise of a professional. The teacher in this example is now aware of and familiar with a body of knowledge and skill (from Area D in Figure 4.4) from which to draw during the lesson in order to improve the lesson, and can make judgements about when and how to do so.

Reflection could equally take place after a lesson:

*'The evaluation, peer evaluation, self-evaluation was good. They're long term changes because they've got to be long term. You think 'Why did I do that?' and you're aware of it and then you don't do it any more. So you're more able to evaluate yourself'. (Joanne)*

In this case it corresponds to Schön's concept of *reflection-on-action* (ibid, p278). Although there may be a blurring between these two kinds of reflection (Schön, ibid, p278; Eraut, 1994, p147), there appears to be a slight distinction between these two data examples. In the first the teacher is drawing reflectively on a body of knowledge and in the second the teacher is developing greater self-awareness of their own behaviour in the classroom. In both, however, the teachers are self-monitoring and so becoming more expert as teachers. In Bird et al's study of an MA in Education (2005) 98% of respondents reported a development in reflective skills, considerably more than the present study. However, the differences in methodology and context may account for this. In the study by Prosser et al (2006), researching into HE teaching certificates, participants viewed their development as reflective practitioners as the most important aspect of the course, above changes in skills and teaching behaviour.

Reflection is an important aspect of the DELTA syllabus. Four of the intended learning outcomes include reflection, e.g.

*'Reflect on feedback received from learners, teachers, etc. and how this is used for own development as a teacher'*

and the re-structured modular DELTA (see Appendix One) has a new assignment entitled 'Professional Development Assignment' which contains a considerable Reflection and Action component. Also, the 'DELTA Handbook for Tutors and Candidates' states (p53):

*'Reflection is increasingly seen as a crucial element in teacher learning....'*

Reflection is seen by interviewees and by Cambridge ESOL as a crucial tool in equipping teachers for a career in EFL.

**F4: Development of critical thinking skills.** Critical thinking and reflection are similar in that each is a type of thinking behaviour but the data differs slightly. Reflective skills referred to teachers' own teaching, perhaps questioning how things were done, while critical thinking questioned why things were done. To explain the difference in terms of Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001), critical thinking might be at the level of *Applying and Analysing*; reflective skills might be at the level of *Evaluating and Creating*. The DELTA intended learning outcomes also differentiate between the two. Reflective skills relate to teaching, beliefs, feedback received; critical thinking refers to materials, resources, approaches, techniques, criteria. Typical of many interview comments regarding critical thinking is Patrick's:

*'It taught me to look at why I was doing things'.*

Being able to question oneself is particularly important for in-service teachers, i.e. experienced teachers who have already developed their practice and become used to doing things in a certain way. The teachers in Williams' study (Williams, R. 2005) also realised the need to justify their practice and be aware of the theoretical underpinnings, and Phipps reports '...the teacher...has a better grasp of the principles behind the decisions she is taking' (2007, p13), a comment similar to many in the present study. Two specific similarities between Phipps' DELTA study and the present DELTA study concern the participants' increasing ability to question: a) their oral error correction strategies and techniques, and b) whether the PPP

grammar teaching sequence (Presentation, Practice, Production), traditionally taught on the CELTA course, is always the most useful in a given context. One interviewee, Emily, in the present study said:

*'I think the people who struggle are still battling along with the PPP approach from the Cert, and haven't thought 'God, there must be more to it than this!'* '

She is implying that one aspect of progress in EFL teaching is a realisation that it is not necessary to follow blindly certain methods, that it is acceptable to question one's practice and the methods taught at the pre-service stage, and to search for a wider palette of choices.

**F5: Identifying the course as a key experience in their professional development as teachers.** This is a general rather than a specific form of impact, but since the course was described by the relevant interviewees as 'key', i.e. of central importance, it has been included in Section F. Its overarching nature means it does not fit into any other section and the use of terms by many interviewees such as *'key, hugely important, central to my development, eureka experience'* suggest perceived *depth* of change, so it sits comfortably in this Inner Core. Furthermore, all those who mentioned this point also mentioned at least two of the other F factors so there may be a link; possibly changes in the Inner Core are perceived as important so therefore the experience is then regarded as 'key'. Some people did not perceive the 'key' nature of the course until some time after the course, suggesting that they needed to perceive the other impact outcomes before they could evaluate it as 'key'. One person said, for example,

*'Yes, I think it was a key learning experience for me. I would say that all the things that I do now that are considered good practice come from the Dip'. (Nina)*

The 'key' nature of the experience may derive from different factors: the fact that the Diploma course comes at an important time for many teachers (Day, 1999, p68), that it comes during the stabilization phase (Huberman, 1995) when they have moved beyond the novice stage of teaching and that this may allow for integration and organisation of their previous experience into their new learning (Eraut, 1994); or that it is so different from the Certificate; or that for some teachers the Diploma is their first experience of formal professional education.

Day (1999, p68) talks of teachers' 'readiness' to embrace new learning at different points in their lives/careers. As with the interviewees in this study, a number of his research subjects also mentioned '*crucial landmark stages of their life and/or career development*' (ibid, p65). However, there does not seem to be an obvious relationship in the Diploma study between having an intrinsic need for professional development (as opposed to an extrinsic need) and regarding the experience as 'key'. Although intrinsic motivation appears in this study to lead to 'deep' impact (see Chapter Five), other factors perhaps come into play with regard to the 'key' nature of the experience.

The Inner Core of learning outcomes in particular points to a developmental, as opposed to a training, perspective on teacher learning, as defined by Richards (1998, see p30 above), since they relate to reflective and critical thinking skills, and beliefs and values. This demonstrates that these two distinctive approaches to teacher learning, i.e. training and development, may co-exist within one in-service event. Whether they co-exist peacefully is another matter; there is little evidence in the data to suggest any interpretation one way or the other.

### **The spread of impact**

Although some participants do mention outcomes in areas A and B, these are fewer. Areas C, D, E, F are by far the most mentioned. This suggests that Figure 4.4 (p78) could be likened to a series of ripples; the further from the centre, the weaker the impact. It is not a question of time, since interviewees mentioned a delayed impact with regard to outcomes in each arena. Neither is it a question of one area being dependent on another; outcomes in Area A, for example, were perceived by somebody who did not mention Area F at all. It is probably a question of degree; the central core is where most changes are perceived to take place, and as the arenas become more distant from the individual teachers themselves (apart from Area C), the effects are less pronounced.

Area C is particularly interesting. It is noticeable that very few teachers mention their own learners. To a certain extent, this mirrors the findings of Powell et al (2003), and also Williams, R. who found that '*changes to classroom practice were articulated in terms of their own*

*pedagogy, rather than children's learning'* (2005, p465). In contrast, though, the teachers in Williams' study did feel that their study had influenced school-wide practice, a result not found in the Diploma study. The results suggest that the Diploma is regarded as a vehicle for *personal* professional development, rather than something which might be of benefit to the profession, the school or the learners. This ties in with the fact that the course is mostly self-financed and mostly elective in terms of both when and whether it is taken. It is also in keeping with the mobile and sometimes temporary nature of EFL teaching in general (Brigham, 2004; Johnston, 1997; Logan and Moore, 2004), which contrasts with the more secure nature of mainstream teaching in a context of compulsory education.

The official DELTA learning outcomes, as published on the Cambridge ESOL website, do not cover Areas E, F1, F2 or F5 in Figure 4.4 (p78). These outcomes were recognised, however, by the stakeholder interviewees. In terms of the official learning outcomes, these features are perhaps unintended or additional, arising perhaps from motivational issues (see Chapter Five), course tutors or learning experiences (see Chapter Six).

Not everybody appeared to perceive changes within the 'Inner Core'. This might be linked to motivation and professional self-identity (see Chapter Five) at the beginning of the course. Those, for example, who mentioned *no* change in the 'Inner Core' were among those who did *not* quote intrinsic motivation as being one of the reasons for taking the course. Also, these people all classed themselves as competent classroom teachers at the outset of the course. These people mentioned many changes in Areas C, D and E, and a few in Area A and B, but their journeys through the professional education experience were slightly different from the other interviewees. Further details are given in Chapters Five and Six.

### **4.3 ONSET OF IMPACT**

Cutting across all the above categories and sub-categories are issues of timing, i.e. when course participants perceived the changes to have taken place. Impact is clearly a complex issue and does not necessarily happen overnight; comments made by interviewees suggested



that there is a time continuum. The times mentioned were: during the course; on finishing the course; not until later, for example, two years.

Factors which might affect the point at which influences from the course become visible to course participants are: a) the nature of the change, i.e. the different aspects shown in Figure 4.1 on p72; b) the degree of intensity of the course, i.e. full-time or part-time; c) time to reflect; d) opportunity to practise; and e) learning styles, previous educational experience and pre-course teaching experience. These points arise from the interview data and are explored below.

### **During the course**

The changes mentioned appeared to be at the level of fundamental, in-the-classroom techniques, such as neater, more organised boardwork, giving instructions to students, or eliciting information from students. One participant said:

*'There was definitely an immediate improvement. Some things I was doing wrong, I eliminated straight away. Like I got rid of excessive eliciting'. (Adam)*

This suggests that these 'training' aspects of the course bore immediate fruit.

### **Upon conclusion of the course**

Increased confidence and motivation were two psychological aspects which appeared to change upon conclusion of the course. A number of comments were made along the lines of these examples:

*'I was definitely more motivated. I was very excited after the course and I wanted to try out what I'd learned' (Felicity)*

and

*'I was driven by the end of it, completely absorbed by the job and dying to get going again'. (Carol)*

The enhanced confidence and motivation resulting from the course also affected professional identity, an area which for six people underwent a transformation at the end of the course: *'I felt I was good at the end of the course' (Sarah), 'I felt like a proper teacher' (Jane).*

Possessing the Diploma, therefore, is important to teachers working in an industry where they sometimes feel like second-class citizens compared to mainstream teachers. The Diploma has cachet in the TEFL world, clear from this data, and this affects both people's reasons for doing it (see Chapter Five) and people's professional status and self-esteem upon finishing it.

The picture is not purely positive, however; the enhanced professional identity did not last very long for some interviewees, and the fault may lie at the door of TEFL employers. Two mentioned that in subsequent jobs they felt they were not taken any more seriously by their employers. Both (Sarah and Emma) were disappointed, as the Diploma had been an important step in their careers and they quickly left their first post-Diploma posts, Sarah stating:

*'It was very non-DELTA and that was one of the reasons I didn't renew my contract there, because I felt that, teaching-wise, it was soul-killing especially after the investment in the DELTA.'*

This unsettled feeling is similar to one of Ayling's teachers who needed to change jobs because, after an in-service BEd course, there was not enough *'to get my teeth into'* (1989, p80). The other Diploma interviewee in this situation, Emma, recommended that:

*'Managers should realise that new Dip candidates are bursting with knowledge and energy'.*

The energy released by achieving the DELTA needs to be harnessed and channelled thoughtfully by managers, in order to support the teacher and influence both their colleagues and students.

### **Delayed impact**

Freeman (1989) warns that change in teacher education is not necessarily immediate. The study by Prosser et al (2006), an investigation into HE teaching certificates, brought out the issue of delayed impact and suggested that this might be due to a busy and pressurised time at the beginning of a HE teaching and research career. Knight (2006, p5), studying a similar context to Prosser et al, states *'There are hints that the benefits of PGC courses may most strongly disclose themselves some time after completion, especially when graduates are in a position to design or ... change modules...'*, i.e. that changes did not become apparent until an

appropriate opportunity was presented. The fact that impact can be delayed is certainly confirmed in the Diploma study but the possible reasons appear to be slightly different from those suggested by Prosser et al and by Knight.

In the Diploma study changes other than the personal and psychological aspects appeared to take longer to filter through. A number of (full-time) interviewees mentioned this, so it is possible, though not conclusive, that the intensity of a full-time course affected its impact. One person in fact attributed the extra time needed to digest things afterwards to the intensity and overload on the full-time course:

*'For the first six months after the course I... was so zombified from the course. But it eventually filtered through and you had time to digest things. You didn't really have time to digest it... because it's so short. It felt as if it was crammed into those three months...The processing and filtering didn't take place until at least two years later'. (Joanne)*

This certainly seems to suggest that the part-time DELTA is, in this respect, more beneficial for the course participants, since there is more time to absorb the new material, and to try things out with their own students. The part-time/full-time contrast is dealt with in more detail in Section 6.1 on p117.

Others used metaphors to explain the gradual absorption of the course material, for example:

*'It filters through immediately but I think it takes a while to absorb it into your system and work as a well-oiled machine' (Adam)*

Another, Rick, who had taken the course only a year before the interview and who was in effect still going through this process, was able to describe this particularly eloquently:

*'I think it is actually one of those Japanese flowers where you add water and then they open, but they do it quite slowly and over a period of time. . I feel that I'll be working with seeds that are there for a very, very long time and particularly in terms of the practical realisation in my teaching. It's going to be coming out for years and years and years'.*

This suggests that the changes are not superficial techniques but are deeper, such as approaches and beliefs. Rick also mentions the fact that, as an in-service teacher, it is necessary to exercise autonomy:

*'There's a lot of weighing up of different kinds of information, what's useful and not useful and why. I think that it's as you measure that against your own experience and working situation and practices that things really start to shake down...you have all this theoretical stuff to assimilate, you have to decide which ones you want and why, which is a huge amount of decision-making really.'*

This also suggests that the power of the course may derive from its nature as an in-service rather than a pre-service course, and ties in with Eraut's suggestion of postponing certain areas of knowledge until after the initial qualification, so that teachers are better prepared to use the knowledge (1994, p120). It also suggests that in-service TEFL teachers 'need' to reflect on teaching and ask 'why?'. The initial teaching qualification is rather different in its approach (to create competent classroom teachers in a one-month intensive course) so, when there is a combination of prior teaching experience plus 'new' ideas and 'new' theory, plus an intrinsic motivation to improve one's teaching, a powerful reflective process can take place.

Individual learning styles and previous learning experiences can also affect the rate of assimilation of new material. Contrast, for example, the following comment from Esther:

*'I think it really can depend on the type of person you are. Because I was used to that intensive learning experience and I was good at processing things quickly.'*

with Mark who had needed to re-write assignments several times:

*'The way I learn I need time for it to sink in, but I've had time to absorb it since then....I need time to think about it and see if I agree with it or not. And with assignments I didn't want to just pick bits out of books and write them down. It didn't mean anything to me'.*

The knowledge that mature learners bring, both of their own previous educational experiences and of their own preferred learning styles, can have a significant effect on the timescale in which impact takes effect. This also supports Craft's advice (2000) that teacher education should cater for different learning styles.

Furthermore, people appear to operate different levels of filtering regarding course content and this may bear some relationship either to the length of pre-Diploma teaching experience or to their age on taking the course. Rick and Mark, quoted in the previous paragraphs, both needed to consider the suitability of new ideas; they were both in their late forties and both had a considerable amount of pre-course experience. In contrast, Esther, who was able to process things quickly, also operated a lower absorbency filter:

*'I loved the content. Loved it. Never questioned it. I swallowed things hook, line and sinker. In some ways I wasn't experienced enough really to question it.'*

Esther had three years' pre-course teaching experience and was only twenty-six on taking the course. This does not imply, however, that the shorter the pre-course teaching experience, the easier the course or the greater its impact. The relationship between pre-course experience and the course itself is more complex, and concerns factors such as the motivation for taking the course and self-identity as a teacher before the course starts. These will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter, but the general implication seems to be that learning needs may be different according to age (this appears not to correspond with Oja [1989] who suggests that professional development needs are not related to age) and level of previous experience of participants.

#### **4.4 DURABILITY OF IMPACT**

The impact of the TEFL Diploma course on people's teaching appears to have achieved some considerable durability. The majority specifically claimed that its impact had lasted a long time, including those for whom more time had elapsed since taking the course. Everybody interviewed, even those who described the course as *'not particularly eye-opening'* or *'with none of those Eureka moments that you hear about'*, was able to report either aspects of their teaching or areas of their present knowledge base which dated back to their Diploma course. One teacher, Nina, took the course in 1987 and reported:

*'I've kept all the stuff from my Dip and still use it even now. My box of Dip stuff has been everywhere with me. I learned more from the Dip than from anything else, as far as my teaching's concerned'.*

Another, Felicity, took the course in 1986 and believed that aspects of her teaching were still imprinted by Diploma learning:

*'One thing that's still with me from that time is it was almost frowned upon to consider using a coursebook and everything had to be made from scratch.... I still feel this need to change it, adapt it and I'm sure that's where I got it from. So from 20 years, I'm still left with that, good or bad'.*

Esther, mentioned in the previous page, took the course in 1993 and remembers large amounts:

*'I find it hard to intervene when students are doing a communicative practice activity and do error correction. I think that came from my Dip because that was the big era of the communicative approach. We were told never to do error correction till later and just let students talk. I still find it hard to change that'.*

There are many examples of comments highlighting the clarity of memory and the durability of impact but in the latter two examples the durability of the material is so strong that the teachers are no longer sure of the value of the practice they mention. Examples of wanting to change Diploma practices are relatively rare. Both Felicity and Esther had only limited pre-course teaching experience, neither had done the Certificate course and both claimed to be *'starting from a low base'* when they took the Diploma. Perhaps these factors led them to be particularly impressionistic and not hold course content up to the light of their own teaching, their own questioning and their own reflection. This suggests that the amount and nature of pre-course teaching experience is important.

In terms of the areas which lasted the longest, change in classroom practice was the area cited as being most durable. For those who had taken their course more recently, affective changes were still influential, but for those for whom a greater time had elapsed, the remaining effects of the Diploma course were evident in classroom practice.

#### **4.5 WHY DOES THIS COURSE HAVE AN IMPACT?**

As the data collection progressed and I began to discern some considerable impact on people's teaching, I started asking respondents directly **why** they thought the course had had

an impact (see Appendix Nine). From these answers I then returned to the rest of the data to investigate what all the interviewees had said about these particular topics. These areas are dealt with in Chapters Five and Six.

## **Summary**

Chapter Four has attempted to answer the research question regarding course outcomes, demonstrating that, although the study is small-scale, there appears to be some evidence of considerable impact, particularly in the practical, cognitive and affective domains. This contrasts with literature which is rather more neutral regarding the impact of formal CPD events in other educational areas (see p21). It has also been possible to suggest a typology of outcomes in terms of depth or centrality. As far as time is concerned, some impact outcomes appear quickly while others are more delayed, and the effects of some changes appear to be sustained. Chapter Five turns to the research question which asks about pre-course factors, and shows some tentative links between pre-Diploma factors and post-Diploma outcomes.





## CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS 2

### PRE-COURSE FACTORS AND IMPACT

#### Introduction

Chapter Five attempts to answer the research question concerning individual decisions: '*What were these TEFL teachers' reasons for taking the Diploma course?*', a question which arose through the pilot interviews, and from Day (1999) on career stages and readiness for CPD. As well as addressing the question of pre-course decisions, this chapter also demonstrates a strong relationship between these decisions and the perceived impact, an unanticipated link which was identified through close engagement with the data. This chapter also addresses the role of pre-course teaching experience and the issue of professional identity, the importance of which was also an unexpected finding which emerged during the data analysis process.

In Chapter Four I took a phenomenographic approach to analysing the data and presented the variation of impact within the group as a whole. Chapter Five builds on that variation and explores possible links between impact and pre-course factors, in order to shed more light on how the variation in impact might work. In that sense it begins to move outside the phenomenographic framework, underlining the fact that this study, although benefiting from a phenomenographic perspective, is not confined within it.

#### 5.1 MOTIVATION FOR TAKING THE COURSE

##### Different types of motivation

Participants were asked about their reasons for taking the Diploma course. The different responses fell clearly into three categories and are summarised for clarity and conciseness in Figure 5.1 on p96.

**Figure 5.1: Different motivational factors**

<p><b>A. Institution-related extrinsic reasons</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. My school pushed me to do it</li> <li>2. My school encouraged me to do it</li> <li>3. Our school gave us a financial incentive</li> <li>4. My school decided to run the course so I did it because it happened to be available</li> </ol>	<p><b>B. Personal extrinsic reasons</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. I wanted a better job/contract</li> <li>6. I wanted to continue in EFL as a career</li> <li>7. It suited my life and career circumstances to do it at that point</li> <li>8. I wanted to get more interesting work</li> <li>9. I wanted to be properly qualified</li> <li>10. I wanted a bit of time away from teaching as a pause for thought</li> <li>11. I wanted to be taken seriously in my career</li> <li>12. I wanted to increase my standing in my school</li> </ol>	<p><b>C. Intrinsic reasons</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Something was missing from my teaching and I wanted to improve it</li> <li>14. I was hungry for more knowledge and theory</li> </ol>
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In terms of balance of data, the commonest area cited was B, as almost everybody supplied extrinsic reasons, whereas a far smaller proportion of the data related to A. Just over half of the participants held intrinsic reasons (C). These proportions in areas B and C accurately mirror those reported by Freedman in her evaluation of the TEFL Diploma (1985), although her participants did not mention area A. The results above differ from Knight et al's study (2006) in two respects, however. Firstly, in their study the intrinsic category was the largest. Secondly, Knight et al demonstrated many examples of development activity '*being driven by compliance with extrinsic drivers*' (ibid, p329), such as a need to start using online teaching/learning methods. In contrast, many of the extrinsic reasons in the Diploma study were related not to 'compliance' but directly to career progression and professional acknowledgement. The differences can perhaps be explained by the nature of TEFL; recognition in terms of qualifications is deemed important in a marginalised and often casualised field.

Comparing these lists with Bird et al's typology of motivations (2005), list A does not appear but reasons 5, 12 and 14 equate with those in their study of MA in Education graduates. Reason 9 has some similarities with one of the reasons reported by Bird et al (2005, p435), 'getting an MA degree', but the use of 'properly' (in reason 9) says something about the TEFL career structure and the short initial qualification. Reason 10 echoes the respondents in Johnston's study (1994). The fact that overall there are few similarities to other studies can

perhaps be explained by the differences between a master's degree and the TEFL Diploma, and between TEFL and mainstream education.

## **Categories**

### **A: Institution-related**

Several interviewees stated that they were strongly encouraged to take the course by their institution, while several others could be viewed as opportunistic in that they enrolled simply because the course was running in their school. Some of these expressed no further reason, one person saying:

*'Because I was given the offer. Purely that'. (Alex)*

Institutions encourage teachers to take the Diploma for several reasons; they feel an individual teacher is 'ready', or management need more teachers to hold this qualification, perhaps for inspection reasons.

### **B: Work and career-related reasons**

Many teachers recognise that, if they wish to remain in and progress in the profession, they will eventually need to take the Diploma course (the Cambridge ESOL website states '*You may ... considering DELTA as a route to further career progression. The qualification is ideal if you wish to extend your professional experience and accept new responsibilities*'). Given that the Diploma is an important qualification (recognised by the British Council: Appendix One) and that it can demand a slightly better pay rate than the Certificate alone (although Bringham [2004] suggests that in some language schools the difference can be as small as 50p per hour), it is not surprising that this was the largest category. Butler, in an article in the EL Gazette, one of the English Language Teaching professional publications, makes this point quite directly: '*Forget the stirring words about updating or improving your teaching skills which you will find on the websites of most diploma courses – the main reason for doing a diploma is to get a better job*' (2009, p8). Butler (ibid) also makes the point that the Diploma is the minimum qualification for those EFL teachers wishing to teach ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in FE colleges in the UK.

Viewing the course in instrumental terms finds echoes in the literature. Bradley and Howard (1992) found that the award was a factor attracting teachers to a master's course, as did Johnston (1994). Ayling (1989) discussed one teacher whose main outcome at the end of the course was to receive their 'piece of paper'. He classes this reaction as extreme; in the Diploma study this view is more common, probably because the Diploma is regarded differently in EFL career terms from a master's degree for mainstream teachers.

### **C: Intrinsic reasons**

In each comment teachers expressed a wish to develop themselves further. The following are typical examples:

*'I felt my teaching was limited in some way' (Sarah)*

*'I felt I wasn't doing the best teaching I could and I wanted to find out how'. (Emma)*

These comments were not expressed in career-terms but came from personal professional motivation. In some of the interviews, however, there are hints that this personal motivation may have been indirectly stimulated by interaction with other professionals:

*'I think I knew there was something missing from the teaching I was doing. And from talking to other colleagues who were talking in acronyms, I'd think 'What are they talking about?' It was feeling like I needed to do something more'.(Emily)*

This suggests that the motivation to do the course may have come partly from the wish to belong to the community of practice and the wish to strengthen professional self-identity, and was therefore partly socially constructed. This bears some resemblance to Beltman and Wosnitza's work (2008) which demonstrated that motivations for becoming a teacher can be shaped by social relationships. This participant clearly felt herself to be in a position of peripherality within her community of practice (Wenger, 1999, p166), in this case the community of practice being either the TEFL world or her particular school or both. Wenger states that *'Newcomers...may be on an inbound trajectory that is construed by everyone to include full participation in its future. Non-participation is then an opportunity for learning'* (ibid, p166). In this and other cases being a non-participant was an opportunity for learning; the motivation to become a full participant of the community stimulated them to take the Diploma course.

## Receptivity

When asked why the course had an impact on their teaching, over a quarter of the participants responded that they had been receptive to change at that stage. Given the fact that several people mentioned this, I investigated their responses in further detail. Their responses contrast with the studies undertaken by Knight (2006) and Prosser et al (2006), both investigating HE teaching certificates, where some Post-graduate Certificate participants questioned the value of the course and also its timing in relation to their career stage. This raises questions about their receptivity to the formal learning experience at that point. In both studies the impact outcomes, although visible, were perhaps not quite as wide-ranging as they might have been.

Receptivity to learning can come about through various reasons. In the Diploma study every person who mentioned readiness or receptivity showed a psychological 'readiness'. One example is:

*'It's to do with you being ready, as a professional, to be developed more.... I suppose also how into teaching you are as well, and how much you want to go on with it. (Emily)*

Emily relates readiness to career motivation. There were other kinds of psychological readiness, one which related to 'being in a rut', as is shown in the following examples:

*'I was in a rut, teaching-wise. I'd had about 7 years' experience, and I thought I was reasonably okay but I seemed to be doing the same things all the time'.*

(Sarah)

and

*'My way of teaching was to do 'Headway' from page one and carry on through the book for the whole year. So I felt I just needed a bit of re-energising' . (Adam)*

Both of these quotations suggest that an awareness of stagnation had prompted receptivity towards new learning. The third type of readiness related to 'the signals being right', as in the following example:

*'I was really ready for it. I was absolutely ready for that type of experience and that type of theory, and that level of theory and that level of challenge. I drank it all in. It was just the right thing at the right moment'. (Esther)*

Esther had been teaching for only three years, so was perhaps just emerging from the novice, survival stage (Berliner, 1994) into the stabilization stage (Huberman, 1995) of teaching and therefore felt ready for new learning.

The quotations above contrast with other people who reported more reluctance than receptivity, as in the following examples:

*'I didn't have great expectations at all to begin with, to be honest'. (Gordon)*

and

*'I was thinking 'I can't really be bothered doing this but I might as well get it over and done with, otherwise the school might start making you do it'....You're scared of change, you're changing your whole working environment and doing something completely new'. (Joanne)*

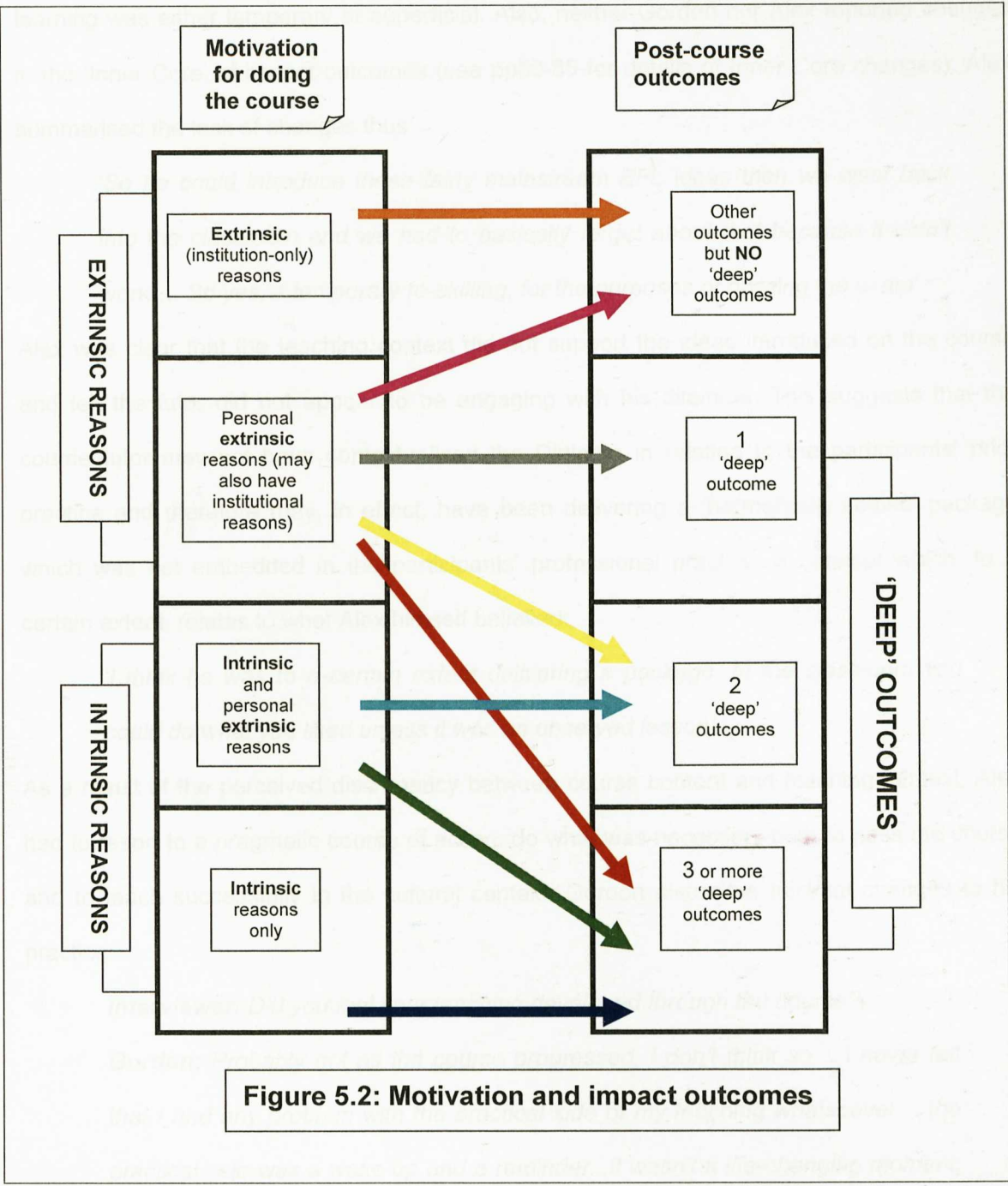
In both of these quotations, there was no sense that the time was 'right' for change. In the circumstances of both Gordon and Joanne there was some institutional pressure; this could mean that, if participants do not feel that the time was particularly 'right', they may have been at a psychological disadvantage at the beginning of the Diploma programme. Course tutors need to be prepared to meet feelings of reluctance and fear of change at the outset of the course and to engage with them.

Although psychological readiness appeared to be related to three different aspects (career motivation, being in a rut, and a feeling that the 'time was right'), these all stem from the fact that these interviewees were in-service teachers, all of whom realised that there was more to come in terms of learning. It was a realisation they reached themselves, rather than being pushed, a realisation that can only come through an awareness of their own practice, often not present in the early stages of teaching. This highlights the role of reflection in reaching a stage of receptivity. Reflection is a key element of professional learning (Schön, 1991). Not only is reflection significant *in* the learning process; it can also propel professionals *towards* further learning.

It is possible that the Diploma teachers who cited intrinsic motivation had some awareness that they no longer were, or wished to be, 'novice' or 'advanced beginner' teachers (Berliner, 1994), and that they were therefore receptive to change. This bears out Day's notions that people who have emerged from the novice stage of their careers do seek and benefit from wider perspectives on teaching (1999, p150), and Cooper's claims (1982, quoted in Day 1999) that teachers in the stabilization stage particularly need new ideas and challenges. There is a difference, however, between 'needing' and 'seeking'. It is perfectly possible that those respondents who were mainly extrinsically motivated were ready and needed further challenge; they did not, however, *seek* to rectify it through further study. It is also possible that they had not reached that stage of self-awareness. Further research, however, relating to readiness, motivation and receptivity to learning might help to shed more light on such concepts.

### **Do certain motivational factors enhance the likelihood of impact?**

The contexts within which course participants might learn something and might recognise an impact on themselves and their teaching are beginning to show, although tentatively. The rest of this section is dedicated to showing the data analysis and data samples which support this assertion. In order to perform the analysis that aimed to access these ideas, I drew a large matrix (Miles and Huberman, 1994) comparing the two factors of motivation and impact, and the results of this analytical process are given in Figure 5.2 on p102 (a '*composite sequence analysis*': Miles and Huberman, *ibid*). This shows that there is a variation in the journeys through the Diploma course and therefore a range of different engagements with this form of TEFL CPD. Phenomenographic research emphasises the variety of perceptions within a group; in terms of range of variation, there appeared to be eight different routes taken from the starting point, initial motivation, to the end-point, perceived outcomes. I explore this below, with the help of individual teachers and their specific journeys. In the rest of Section 5.1 I refer to these particular teachers because the details of their individual stories help to link different aspects of the findings and shed further light on the phenomenographic presentation in Chapter Four.



**A. Institution-only: Gordon and Alex (the 'orange route')**

One factor appears not necessarily to link with particular 'depth' of outcome, i.e. taking a course simply because it is on offer. Gordon and Alex both gave their motivation for doing the Diploma as institution-only, and both perceived the changes in their teaching to be minimal. Their motivation is similar to the 'less self-determined' of Ryan and Deci's extrinsic factors (2000), which do not suggest powerful change. Both Gordon and Alex pointed to certain modifications as a result of the course, but each mitigated this with comments suggesting that



learning was either temporary or superficial. Also, neither Gordon nor Alex reported changes in the 'Inner Core' of impact outcomes (see pp80-85 for details of Inner Core changes). Alex summarised the lack of changes thus:

*'So he could introduce these fairly mainstream EFL ideas then we went back into the classroom and we had to basically forget about that because it didn't work.... So yes, a temporary re-skilling, for the purposes of passing the exam'.*

Alex was clear that the teaching context did not support the ideas introduced on the course and felt the tutor did not appear to be engaging with his dilemma. This suggests that the course tutor may not have contextualised the Diploma in relation to the participants' prior practice and therefore may, in effect, have been delivering a 'hermetically-sealed' package which was not embedded in the participants' professional practice, a concept which, to a certain extent, relates to what Alex himself believed:

*'I think he was to a certain extent delivering a package. In the classroom you could do what you liked unless it was an observed lesson'.*

As a result of the perceived discrepancy between course content and teaching context, Alex had to resort to a pragmatic course of action: do what was necessary both to pass the course and to teach successfully in the cultural context. Gordon also cites minimal changes to his practice:

**Interviewer:** *Did you feel your teaching developed through the course?*

**Gordon:** *Probably not as the course progressed, I don't think so... I never felt that I had any problem with the practical side of my teaching whatsoever... the practical side was a wake-up and a reminder...it wasn't a life-changing moment, that side, no.*

Given these parallel features, I studied Alex's and Gordon's interview transcripts in further detail. Although it is not possible to establish clear links and they are alone in this category, there are nevertheless significant similarities. Both Gordon and Alex had a strong professional identity before the course started, i.e. both felt that their teaching was satisfactory before the course began (Alex:: *'Not for me so much classroom teaching practice, because I had that more or less down before I started the course'*. Gordon: see exchange above). In addition,

both Gordon and Alex made clear throughout the interviews that they had reservations about their course tutor(s) (see p132-133). The link between motivation and impact outcomes is not simple. It is possible, however, that the three factors of: a) professional identity, b) the lack of any particular motivation, and c) minimal perceived impact may be connected. It is also possible that lack of impact may be partly attributable to teachers' perceptions of the approach taken by course tutors (discussed further in Chapter Six).

## **B. Extrinsic motivation: Rachel and Carol**

Rachel is one example from the 'pink route' in Figure 5.2 (p102). Rachel took the course because she wanted to find a better job. Rachel was relatively positive about the course but did not perceive any great outcomes, and in this respect, was similar to Gordon and Alex:

- *'I think before the Delta, I've always felt at home in the classroom and I don't think the Delta hugely impacted on my teaching style or who I am as a teacher'.*
- *'I don't know how much it's changed my teaching but it has given me more confidence and it certainly has affected my career, which is why I really did it'.*

Rachel did not report any 'Inner Core' changes. Her teaching identity was comfortable before the course and it remained mostly unchanged afterwards. It is possible that Rachel's comfortably strong professional identity, together with her extrinsic motivation, combined in such a way as to make the course an enjoyable but not particularly significant experience in terms of major learning outcomes.

Carol, in contrast, is typical of the group represented by the red arrow in Figure 5.2 (p102). In other words, Carol, like Rachel, started the course with extrinsic motivation, but she, unlike Rachel, reported a number of 'Inner Core' changes. Carol mentioned three 'deep' outcomes: a changed teaching persona, changed teaching approaches, and a feeling that the course had been a key professional development experience. It therefore appears to be possible to embark on a professional development course without being aware of any 'readiness' in terms of a personal, intrinsic need for development, but still gain enormous benefit, as Carol seems to have done. Carol expressed her own surprise at this:

*'It was funny, because I didn't really even expect or want anything. Before I did it, I thought 'I have to do this because I have to get this qualification... to be able to get a better job or a permanent job'. But when I did the course, I loved it, really loved it. I think I'm probably quite unusual. ... It was like a double bonus – I was doing this for job reasons but I really liked it a lot, really a lot.'*

It is possible that Carol, and the other interviewees who had a similar 'journey', gained awareness during the course of personal motivation, or that other factors led to enhanced impact. Carol stated:

*'It was a good course. It really changed me. I think what really matters is who teaches it, if you really want to do it and that it's relevant to your teaching'.*

Another participant on the 'red route' echoed this and added the sharing and discussion with fellow trainees, while a third linked the depth of impact to the fact that the ideas on the course were sensible, and that she had learned how to evaluate and reflect on her own teaching.

One further possible reason for the multiplicity of outcomes could be the type of extrinsic motivation that Carol and the others in this group held. They professed a mixture of at least three different extrinsic reasons (more than other people starting from the same point). This provides powerful support for Ryan and Deci's contention (2000) that some forms of extrinsic motivation are more self-determined than others and may achieve outcomes on a par with intrinsic motivational factors.

Rachel (mentioned above) and the other teachers represented by the yellow/grey/pink arrows in Figure 5.2 (p102), however, shared the same starting point as Carol, yet did not reach the same end-point. This suggests that other factors might be at work, which led me to return to the interview data once again, in the manner of Grounded Theory, to look for other possible explanations for the different outcomes. The issues of professional self-identity (Section 5.2, p106) and course tutors (Section 6.6, p132), which so strongly bound together Alex and Gordon above, may be possible linking factors. Another teacher, Anna, for example, represented by the 'yellow route', might have reported more deep outcomes and followed the

'red route', as did Carol, had it not been for her negative experience of some of the course tutors. Anna's experience is explored in further detail in Sections 6.3 (p121) and 6.6 (p132).

### **C. Those with intrinsic motivation: Esther and Mark**

Esther (part of the 'green route' in Figure 5.2, p102) was highly intrinsically motivated and cited outcomes which covered four of the 'Inner Core' changes, as well as a number of others. Others in this group showed a similar pattern. This suggests, albeit tentatively, that if intrinsic motivation is present at the beginning of the course, the chances that it will have impact on teaching in a deeper way are good. If teachers are 'ready' to be developed, there is a greater likelihood that this might happen. This appears to confirm Ryan and Deci's claim that *'intrinsic motivation results in high-quality learning'* (2000, p55).

### **Mark (the 'pale blue route' in Figure 5.2, p102)**

All those who were intrinsically motivated mentioned impact in almost every category, with three or more 'Inner Core' changes cited. Mark, however, was the exception. Mark only perceived two deep outcomes, even though his teacher identity and experience of course tutors were similar to the others in this group. Further perusal of Mark's interview transcript showed that his main post-DELTA job had been in a context where the DELTA content was not deemed suitable (*'Why did I bother doing the DELTA if I'm doing this kind of work?'*) and that his work since then had been part-time. Although Mark is the only example of this route, this suggests that the impact of the course might be dependent on post-course consolidation in the kind of job that provides the opportunity to use the course material.

As stated above, within this small sample the motivation for taking the course seemed to have some link with impact, and the nature of this impact.

## **5.2 PROFESSIONAL SELF-IDENTITY**

One feature which surfaced in many interviews, although there was no specific question on this topic, concerned professional self-identity upon embarking on the course. I have analysed

this and provide the analysis diagram (a composite sequence analysis in the manner of Miles and Huberman, 1994) in Appendix Ten.

A small number of interviewees appeared more comfortable and stronger in their teaching identities, e.g. Alex, Gordon and Rachel, as mentioned in the previous section. These teachers spoke in confident terms about their teaching at the beginning of the course. Once I discovered the issue of professional identity, I returned to these transcripts again to search for more clues, and found that none mentioned intrinsic motivation for taking the course and none mentioned Inner Core outcomes. It is possible that, due to their self-identity as teachers, they did not feel as strong an internal 'need' for self-improvement as did those who were intrinsically motivated, or they did not feel as peripheral within the community of practice (Wenger, 1999). It is also possible that the course did not come at a time in their lives/careers which coincided with a point of readiness for new learning, as Day (1999) suggests, or that they had already reached an advanced stage of development.

Any of these reasons might explain why these people did not perceive themselves to have gained any of the 'Inner Core' outcomes. One of the group, however, did discuss a change in teaching approach (a 'deep' outcome), but this person differed from the others in the group in that his area of professed confidence concerned knowledge rather than classroom skills, and his comments were not expressed in quite such confident terms as the others:

*'... I'd been working at x and they do a lot of INSET training so every week we'd have an input session on something....That meant a lot of the concepts were very familiar to me before I started the course'. (Doug)*

This contrasts with the teacher who did not understand her colleagues when they were *'talking in acronyms'* and seems to confirm the concept of identity formation within a community of practice (Wenger, 1999; Lave and Wenger, 1991). Perhaps the greater confidence that these teachers perceived in their teaching came from more CPD as part of their everyday teaching lives, or from greater support within their teaching community.

In contrast to the 'confident' group, the other interviewees either did not mention any areas of confidence or expressed sentiments such as:

*'At the start I felt completely inadequate compared to some others. They seemed so far ahead in terms of their experience.'* (Felicity)

Like Felicity, several others attributed their lack of a confident teacher identity to comparing themselves with 'expert' teachers in their school, which suggests that teacher identity might be socially constructed and that this inadequacy caused them to feel peripheral within the community of practice. Other comments which demonstrate a less confident sense of professional identity can also be seen in the light of Wenger's concept of communities of practice (1999), but relate more specifically to qualifications. Esther, for example, along with some others, explained that she had come to the Diploma without the CELTA:

*'I felt I wasn't really a proper teacher because I hadn't done any qualifications'.*

A 'proper teacher' was someone who possessed the CELTA and who therefore belonged to a different community of teachers. Others, in contrast, attributed their less secure identity to the fact that the CELTA provided insufficient preparation for life as a teacher:

*'I had problems in my classes but I didn't understand why, or how to sort them. I didn't know what I didn't know....Externally I was seen as good...but internally I was unhappy. I felt I was masquerading, I felt like I was a phoney within a profession because I didn't know what I was doing and I only had a one-month qualification, which didn't prepare you for anything.... So I felt really rocky as a teacher'.* (Jane)

Jane had a strong awareness of her practice and it is her reflections which seem to have contributed to her lack of a confident identity and her subsequent motivation for professional development. There is tension between different views of her practice; others saw her as being further along the inbound trajectory (Wenger, 1999, p154) of 'belonging' to the community of practice than she perceived herself. Both the CELTA and the DELTA are seen in these comments as constituting boundaries or gateposts within the community of practice, even though views of the CELTA differ.

There appear to be some links between self-identity and motivation, and between self-identity and deep outcomes. Those who appeared to have a stronger self-identity reported neither intrinsic motivation nor deeper impact outcomes, and vice versa. Because there were no specific questions in the interviews about professional identity, however, these speculations must remain tentative. Clearly, though, the relationship between motivation, self-identity as a teacher, and impact outcomes is complex and would benefit from further research.

## **Michael**

The two triangulation interviews (see Appendix Thirteen and p133) undertaken in order to check findings against other people's experience were very useful, particularly with respect to this topic. One person confirmed that the 'green route' in Appendix 10 closely mirrored her own experience. The other, Michael, however, took a completely different route, drawn in a black dotted arrow in Appendix Ten. The intrinsic motivation that Michael reported might have suggested deeper outcomes:

*'I was motivated and I was expecting a revolution, but it didn't happen so I was disappointed. I went in and out of the DELTA the same person. I loved doing the course but I'm not sure I learned much and I'm not sure the DELTA improved my teaching at all.'*

However, his strong self-identity, apparent at other points in the interview, might have mitigated this. Although Michael's interview introduces a new perspective, it nevertheless still highlights the potential importance of professional identity and the fact that the Diploma appears to 'work' better for those who feel less sure of themselves professionally. One other issue mentioned in Michael's interview, the teaching style, was important to him and is dealt with in more detail on p115 and p133.

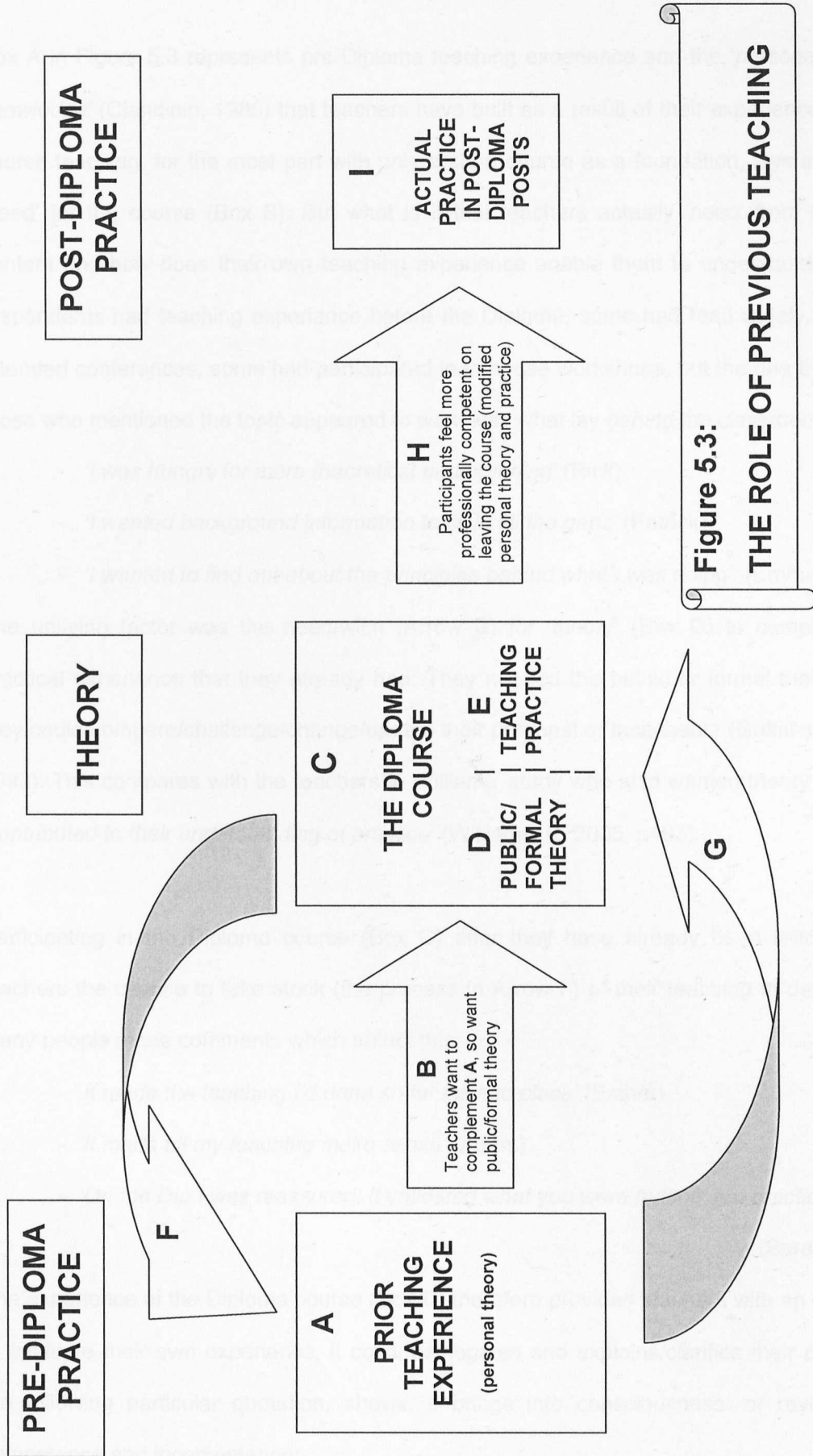
## **5.3 PREVIOUS TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

In response to the question *'Why do you think the course had an impact?'*, several interviewees said *'It builds on your own previous teaching experience'*. Given this explicit link, I investigated in detail all the comments about pre-course experience (the majority of respondents touched on this issue). This section discusses the role of pre-course teaching vis-

à-vis in-course learning, a more dynamic process than was originally envisaged at the start of the research.

I propose that these two factors are related and that the strength of the Diploma results partly from the fact that it is an in-service course, and therefore much of the learning is based on and relevant to prior teaching experience. The TEFL Diploma course operates on a *Practice – Theory – Practice* model of professional education, in that the ‘theory’ follows a period of practical experience, builds on and complements that experience, then leads into further practice in subsequent teaching. In this model the theory can be more successfully and solidly ‘situated’ and integrated than a *Theory – Practice* model, common in many forms of professional education. School-based PGCE programmes are one important way of integrating theory and practice but the TEFL Diploma model is very different. It is possible that the quality of reflection might be stronger because participants have more of their own practice to reflect on, and are coming to the Diploma having left behind the novice teacher stage (Berliner, 1994) where simply ‘surviving’ is a key aspect. The relationship between pre-course teaching and the Diploma course itself is complex, however, and in my own conceptualisation of the issues, I found a diagram useful. I present this diagram in Figure 5.3 (p111) in order to demonstrate the connections between the different issues, and then explain it using the interview data.





**Figure 5.3:**  
**THE ROLE OF PREVIOUS TEACHING**

Box A in Figure 5.3 represents pre-Diploma teaching experience and the '*personal, practical knowledge*' (Clandinin, 1985) that teachers have built as a result of their experience. The pre-course teaching, for the most part with only a short course as a foundation, lays in place the 'need' for the course (Box B). But what is it that teachers actually 'need' from the course content and how does their own teaching experience enable them to understand it? All the respondents had teaching experience before the Diploma, some had read widely, some had attended conferences, some had participated in in-house workshops, but the one thing that all those who mentioned the topic appeared to want was what lay *behind* the classroom teaching:

- '*I was hungry for more theoretical underpinning*' (Rick)
- '*I wanted background information to fill in all the gaps*' (Patrick)
- '*I wanted to find out about the principles behind what I was doing*'. (Emma)

The unifying factor was the need/wish (Arrow B) for 'theory' (Box D) to complement the practical experience that they already had. They needed the public or formal theory so that they could compare/challenge/change/update their personal or tacit theory (Griffiths and Tann, 1992). This compares with the teachers in Williams' study who also wanted theory because it '*contributed to their understanding of practice*' (Williams, R. 2005, p463).

Participating in the Diploma course (Box C) after they have already been teaching gives teachers the chance to take stock (the process in Arrow F) of their teaching to date (Box A). Many people made comments which reflect this:

- '*It made the teaching I'd done so far fall into place*' (Esther)
- '*It made all my teaching make sense*' (Adam)
- '*On the Dip I was reassured. It validated what you were putting into practice*'.

(Sarah)

The experience of the Diploma course (Box C) therefore provides teachers with an opportunity to evaluate their own experience, it confirms/negates and explains/clarifies their practice. As the following particular quotation, shows, it brings into consciousness, or reveals, one's competence and incompetence:

*'I did a large part of the stuff before but I didn't realise why. Now I know why I'm doing it and I'm more conscious of it, although it's still sort of automatic. Now I know why so I channel the automaticness'. (Mark)*

Being able to make sense of your own practice, being able to see its strengths/limitations is a valuable step towards learning more. Building on and reflecting on one's experience is also one of the characteristics of adult learning (Tusting and Barton, 2003). The participants quoted above had that chance during their course, but I believe course providers need to ensure that the opportunity exists during every course, they need to make clear that this is happening and they need to be competent in dealing with the de-construction and re-construction processes. A number of writers (Williams, M., 2003; Williams, R., 2005; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Singh and Richards, 2006; Lamb, 1995; Roberts, 1998) are convinced of the importance of exploring and describing personal classroom practice (and therefore personal theories) before being ready for more theorised practice. Evidence from the interviews suggests that it is both the 'public theory' on the course (Part D in Figure 5.3) and the Teaching Practice (Part E) that enable these processes.

As well as the course (Box C) shedding light on pre-course teaching (Arrow F), the process works in reverse. In other words, pre-course teaching facilitates an understanding of the course content (Arrow G). This supports Singh and Richards' claim (2006) that in-service teacher learning should draw on previous teaching experience. In the eyes of several Diploma interviewees, an understanding of the course is dependent on pre-course experience. Olivia stated:

*'DELTA is building on your own experience. I can see why they ask for CELTA plus two years' experience. DELTA is working on what you've already experienced and taking it a step further',*

while Esther said:

*'It draws very much on your experience. All the written assignments draw very much on what you know and the learners you're used to teaching, and the materials you're used to teaching....It's very much an in-service course...You can't really benefit from it without several years' experience'.*

The value of previous experience is supported by Cambridge ESOL on their website.

So, the practical experience (Box A in Figure 5.3, p111), as well as serving the purpose of providing a 'need' for theory (Box B), also provides a tool for understanding it (Arrow G). There were several moments when interviewees explained how the course content made sense to them in the light of their teaching, the following being particularly pertinent examples:

- *'and I'd think to myself 'Oh yes! I understand why that's a good idea because I can relate it to so-and-so in my teaching' ' (Patrick)*
- *'It was like a curtain taken off my eyes...it made sense. What they said was so true and I thought, from what I'd observed in my classroom, I thought 'God, yes, of course!' ' (Adam)*

This demonstrates that, for successful teacher learning, teachers need to bring something to the process in order to anchor the new learning. The pre-course teaching experience provides the basis in which to integrate new knowledge. It is possible, and perhaps indeed crucial, for participants to use prior teaching experience to make sense of course content, to envision their prior practice as they learn the theory, and to apply new ideas to known experience. Thus the personal/tacit theory is a means to understand the public/formal theory, and the latter is interpreted in the light of existing understanding (Griffiths and Tann, 1992). This process was enabled because the public/formal theory was deemed relevant to the interviewees' previous teaching.

In this way prior teaching acts as a filter for new knowledge. Some interviewees make explicit reference to the process they went through in matching ideas from the course to real contexts, and of deciding whether to accept or reject new concepts. In this way, the filter of prior experience can act as a limiter as well as an enhancer. This corresponds with Johnston et al's findings (2005) when interviewing experienced ESL teachers about their professional development; there is often tension between teaching experience acting as a schema against which to evaluate new information, and the same experience acting as a filter through which new items are discarded because they do not fit.

The terms used by the interviewees in the current study to discuss the role of prior teaching experience, such as *'links/builds/relates to/draws on/makes sense/fall into place'*, suggest a sense of integration. This integration, shown by the circular processes in A – G in Figure 5.3, are perhaps what contributes to the professional competence in Box H and the re-organised personal theory/practice in subsequent teaching (Box I). The terms the respondents use also support the view of a dynamic process, such as social constructivism, rather than a transmission view of teacher learning, ideas which are taken up in more detail in the next chapter. The way in which interviewees discuss the role of their prior teaching experience also suggests that they went through a developmental rather than merely a training process, as part of their DELTA, to use Richards' terms (1998, pxiv, see p30 above).

The views that Michael expressed (p109) confirm these interpretations, although from a different perspective:

*'The course fitted in with my experience and I could relate it to my experience. But I was disappointed because I needn't have had the experience, because it wasn't called on during the course. It was about input and dissemination rather than bringing our experience to the session. It was lecturing and non-interactive'.*

In other words, the process in Arrow F (Figure 5.3, p111) took place but the potential of Arrow G was not sufficiently exploited because the teaching method was one of transmission, rather than one which valued participants' existing knowledge (Hayes, 1995). As well as Michael's professional self-identity, the teaching methods adopted on the course may be another possible explanation for the lack of perceived impact; this suggests, as will be seen in the next chapter, that the learning processes and the tutors' teaching style may be significant to the impact of the Diploma course.

## **Summary**

This chapter has addressed the research question relating to pre-course decisions and has outlined the different forms of motivation cited by participants, demonstrating that there may be some links between motivation and course outcomes, although the issue of professional teaching identity may be linked to both. The relationship between prior teaching experience

and Diploma learning has also been explored, suggesting again that pre-course factors might have some influence on later learning processes. Chapter Six focuses on these learning processes, highlighting the role played by other people, and thereby addressing the third of the three research questions.

# CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS 3

## PEOPLE AND LEARNING PROCESSES:

### THEIR RELEVANCE TO IMPACT

#### Introduction

Chapter Six looks at the learning processes during the course itself, and particularly the role of other people. When asked why they felt the course had influenced their teaching (Appendix Nine), the fact that more than half of the interviewees cited the tutors was indicative that this was worth exploring further. Equally, over half also claimed that sharing with and learning from other participants on the course had been key processes. In analysing the data relating to tutors, learning and fellow participants, this chapter attempts to answer the final research question, which investigates different kinds of learning experiences.

In seeking to lay out the range of different learning experiences encountered on the course, the first part of Chapter Six follows a phenomenographic approach to the presentation of findings. As with Chapter Five, however, I have explored these themes and categories further and thereby begun to move outside the phenomenographic framework.

#### 6.1 DID MODE OF STUDY (F/T OR P/T) AFFECT LEARNING?

The mode of study chosen appears to have had some effect on the learning processes. Part-time study was perceived to have one clear advantage, mentioned by each of the part-time trainees: that it provided useful opportunities to integrate the theoretical and practical aspects of the course. This took many forms: trainees could apply theory to their own classes; they had more time to process and digest new knowledge, and to read around the subject; and they could experiment with new ideas in a non-assessed environment. To a certain extent the findings are supported by the literature. Edwards and Owen recognise the advantages of part-time study: *'As the teachers participating in the (MA TEFL) programme all remained in-service throughout their studies, they benefited from the opportunity to immediately apply what they were learning on an ongoing basis'* (2002, p56). Guskey states that *'Training sessions must be extended, appropriately spaced, or supplemented with additional follow-up activities to*

*provide the feedback and coaching necessary for the successful implementation of new ideas'* (2000, p23, my emphasis). Surprisingly, though, only one Diploma trainee chose part-time study for this reason; the others chose it for financial or other reasons. The advantage, therefore, was more of a side-effect than a goal in itself.

Although the advantages provided by part-time study find support in the literature, the data showed that this was overlaid by two other issues: lifecycle factors and individual learning preferences. Several of the full-time trainees conceded that part-time study would have provided the above advantages but nevertheless strongly defended their choice of full-time study. Several had chosen this because it suited their life circumstances, and a substantial proportion because it suited their learning style:

- *'I enjoyed focusing on it intensively. I was really soaked into it'* (Jane)

- *'I like getting things like that over and done with very quickly'.* (Rachel)

A feature of mature learners is their understanding of their preferred learning styles and processes (Tusting and Barton, 2003); there was tension, however, between learning styles and lifecycle factors. One participant, for example, had finished a job abroad and was returning to the U.K; a full-time course suited the circumstances, but this person emphasised the difficulties and stress of intensive full-time study. Even those who claimed to prefer intensive forms of learning still found that the often frenetic nature of the full-time DELTA did not provide sufficient opportunity to process material, which was ultimately very stressful:

*'I need to be 'in' something otherwise I lose interest and momentum...So I wanted to get it over and done with, but at times it did seem a tad frenetic. The reading load was overwhelming. I'd rather have had time to read fully and digest the theoretical aspects, not just skim. I need time to think about something and see if I agree with it'.* (Mark)

Craft states that training experiences should attempt to cater for different learning styles (2000, p49), but on a full-time course it would appear that some of these participants may have felt they were being left behind.



## 6.2 PATHWAYS TO LEARNING

The data suggests a variation in pathways leading to teacher learning on the Diploma course, each of which involved or was mediated by other people:

**DISCUSSION** of experience, reading, practice, ideas, theory with tutors and fellow students  
**MODELLING** of teaching in different forms (by tutors)  
**REFLECTION** on experience, training sessions, reading, assignments and teaching practice  
**FEEDBACK** on own teaching during the course  
**MENTORING** by experienced teachers  
**OBSERVING** other people teaching

*Reflection* was the term used to describe the processes through which interviewees felt they learned to evaluate their own teaching, to justify their classroom decisions, to analyse experiential learning, and to decide whether training content was useful. Interviewees perceived a need to weigh up ideas:

*'I had to reflect on whether it was going to be any use to me in my teaching'* (Mark)

This comment, one of several, suggests some degree of resistance to knowledge transmission, and in this way is consistent with Tusting and Barton's views of adult learning (2003, p36). Interviewees also reflected on practice:

*'I found it useful to try things out then talk to people about it'* (Joanne)

Therefore, as well as an outcome of learning (Chapter Four), reflection also appears to be a process of learning. This is consistent with Day's view (1999, p205) that learning is influenced by opportunities for reflection, and Schön's belief (1991) that reflection-on-action is a way of becoming more expert in a professional field.

The fact that other people were involved in all the reported learning processes suggests a view of learning as social participation (Singh and Richards, 2006), and of learning taking place within a community of practice (Wenger, 1999). This also accords with advice given by Roberts (1998) that training courses should adopt a broadly social constructivist approach.

## Experiential and interactive learning

Each of the six pathways above is linked to experiential learning, a process particularly valued by the interviewees, and which can take a number of different forms. The respondents were very clear about the style in which they preferred the training sessions to be delivered. Those who discussed the teaching style were unanimous in their dislike of 'lecture mode' and in their appreciation of and need for interactive, experiential sessions. This links closely with Kolb's focus (1993) on experience and process rather than outcomes and knowledge acquisition. Rick describes this very well:

*'There were one or two sessions with one tutor which were a little bit like a warmed-up instant meal....because it was all written down what the content was to be...It didn't come over with any degree of spontaneity. It felt like going through it, sort of hard to take it in, because you had to keep pinching yourself and tell yourself 'This might be useful. Think why!' '*

Rick clearly found difficulty perceiving the relevance of lecture delivery of pre-defined content. The propositional knowledge was available but not offered in a way which was deemed accessible or digestible. The session described here appears not to be in accord with writers who suggest that teacher learning experiences should be interactive (Waters, 2006; Roberts, 1998) and task-based (Hayes, 1995).

Emily also found 'lecture style' off-putting:

**Interviewee:** *She did all the boring... she was really into the theory, she did it in lecture style. Maybe that's what put me off all the theory of it...It's hard to make that kind of input interactive, but she could have done more jigsaw-y things. But it was her standing at the front telling us....*

**Interviewer:** *So did you prefer the interactive way of doing things?*

**Interviewee:** *Yes, yes (emphatically). It was like an example of what you were supposed to be doing in class.*

Emily was clearly struck by the incongruity between lecture delivery and the type of classroom teaching required of the trainees. An expectation of good modelling and congruence between

tutor delivery and tutor demands was strong. In contrast, Olivia did appreciate the learning method she had experienced on her course:

*'Discovery learning...there's so much validity about that way of learning. It was experiential.... The things I learned in that way... have remained. I wouldn't have the same understanding of it if I'd just read it'.*

A preference for an interactive style of learning is in agreement with literature in the area of andragogy: Knowles (1996), for example, advocates activities which are interactive, participatory and experiential, in order to draw benefit from adult learners' life experience. Wenger also suggests that learning involves interaction with a social community and proposes *'ways of engaging students in meaningful practices, or providing access to resources that enhance their participation'* (1999, p10). Interestingly, however, an interactive mode of learning was not mentioned in the list of key factors which aided teacher learning in Phipps' study (2007) of a DELTA student during her course.

An interactive approach may have been particularly significant in the present study for several reasons. Firstly, the participants were adult learners and in-service teachers, and had considerable prior experience to bring to the course. Secondly, they were all language teachers; in current EFL thinking, it is difficult to develop language skills in learners using anything but an interactive methodology so they were probably all teaching interactively themselves. This raises issues, covered later in this chapter, of integrity, congruence and good modelling.

### **6.3 FEEDBACK ON ASSESSED LESSONS**

Feedback on observed lessons was reported as a significant pathway to learning and a number of people were able to outline what they felt they had learned from this. Two such examples are:

*'I got useful feedback on my teaching that before I hadn't really had, from observers, until then.... I learnt a lot. Mostly in terms of classroom management, classroom language, instruction giving, that kind of thing.'* (Esther)

and

*'It made me aware of how much more I had to put into the planning of my lessons'.*

(Carol)

This shows that learning resulted from both the feedback given by the tutors and also the stricter lesson planning that assessed lessons entailed. The link between assessed DELTA lessons and lesson planning is also made by Phipps: *'...forced the teacher to plan her lessons in a more principled and detailed way'* (2007, p14). Although learning did take place as a result of planning and receiving feedback on lessons, other issues relating to the feedback situation may have adversely affected learning. With regard to supervision, the data in the present study suggests that one size does not fit all, which suggests a need for Gebhard's creative approach to supervision (1984, see p35 above). Trainees' needs varied; they depended on such factors as the nature of the feedback details, and the confidence, experience and individual learning preferences of the trainee teacher.

## **Anna**

Supervisory feedback received both praise and criticism in equal measure. Anna concluded:

*'What did I learn from it? Never to do that to anybody. It interfered with my learning. It was wholly negative'.*

She felt there was a lack of professional integrity; a pass-fail decision already made by her assessor was not communicated until the end of the feedback session, in order for her to reflect on the process, although the quality of her reflection did not seem to affect the pass-fail decision already made. Anna makes clear that the reflective process was damaged by this breakdown of trust:

*'My responses were tinged by 'I don't know if I've passed or failed'...on a human level it didn't work for me'.*

The post-lesson discussion has to take account of all levels, i.e. the cognitive **and** the affective. In this instance withholding the decision until the end of the post-lesson interview appears to have failed miserably on both the cognitive and affective levels.

The vehemence with which Anna's comments were delivered may be exceptional, therefore conclusions should not be drawn on the basis of one interview. Other teachers, however, also

made negative comments about both the feedback they were given and the way in which it was delivered. Jane agreed that the post-lesson reflective process had been compromised:

*'You were writing your post-lesson reflection with a view to the feedback session you were going to have. Rather than saying what you really thought, you were thinking 'Now what's the assessor going to think about this? I should try and second-guess what she's going to say'. (Jane)*

This begs several questions: what validity is there in development and assessment being rolled into one? Despite what people say about what they learned, does learning really take place when people's teaching is being assessed?

Another aspect of feedback which was criticised by interviewees concerned the way in which comments were phrased. Doug, who felt that feedback on observed lessons was the most useful part of the course, reported:

*'He was just a bit too blunt and a bit too negative in his feedback.....He did say some positive things but it was just the balance. He was too critical and the others were able to say it in a more tactful or more positive way'.*

This bluntness is an example of the *hypomitigation* (Wajnryb, 1995), i.e. too little mitigation, that is sometimes used in supervisory discourse, and appears to contrast with Wajnryb's findings concerning language teacher supervisors who had '*a natural reluctance to deliver bad news*' (1994, p87, quoted in Bailey, 2006, p155).

Positivity was a characteristic much prized by the respondents. Those who praised the feedback always referred to the fact that the constructive feedback had been phrased positively:

- *'It always felt like they gave us enough pointers and it was positive. It was 'Maybe you should watch out here and here and here'. It was always quite well delivered'. (Patrick)*

- *'It was positive and confidence-building'. (Jane)*

- *'They were both really good at saying 'Instead of doing that, you could have done that, or this, or this''. (Emily)*

These course tutors appeared to be adhering to a developmental model of teacher learning rather than a deficit model (Randall and Thornton, 2001, p95), and it is probable that this positive approach rendered messages more acceptable than the hypomitigation above.

Two interviewees, however, appreciated the fact that their tutors were very direct in their feedback, and one said:

*'Some of the others felt they were too harsh. I didn't feel that. I felt they were very straight-talking, they didn't mince their words, especially my favourite one. She said exactly what she thought.'* (Sarah)

Both of these interviewees had been teaching for some time, they had strong intrinsic motivation for taking the course, knew exactly why they were doing it and what they wanted from it, and had reported positive experiences of the course itself, in comparison to those whose experiences were more traumatic and stressful. It is possible that confidence engendered by these experiences, together with personality factors, combined in a way that led 'straight-talking' to appeal to them whereas others might have perceived this as overly harsh.

The level of feedback detail also elicited different responses from interviewees. This suggests that the feedback styles may have varied considerably, and may also imply that trainees varied in their 'readiness' to learn about aspects of their own teaching, especially if they already had a strongly defined identity as a classroom teacher. One participant, Emma, liked the details:

**Interviewee:** *My attention was drawn to certain things that I do that I wasn't aware of. I felt that that was really good: 'You should position yourself here, have more eye contact, you're not including this student.' ....Not everybody gave such good feedback... Some people gave details and other people were less observant.*

**Interviewer:** *So were the details helpful?*

**Interviewee:** *Absolutely.... It's good to focus on the things like 'You repeat too much, you talk too much'. The little things. That was the stuff I appreciated.*

Emma was at the stage of unconscious incompetence (part of a five-part model designed for intercultural communication learning [Howell, 1982], but which is nevertheless useful for any kind of professional education) and, being strongly motivated to improve her teaching skills, was ready to be brought to the stage of conscious incompetence. Two other people in a similar position stated that they were ready to hear more detail and that the feedback sessions were rather brief. They were motivated but felt the developmental opportunities were restricted. Randall and Thornton (2001, p135) provide an overview of how trainee learning styles might affect their responses to feedback; it is possible that those who appreciated receiving details of their teaching in the feedback context preferred analytic rather than global styles, and vice versa.

Supervisory interventions draw trainees' notice to their own practice. Provided the trainees are ready to recognise these points, these interventions may lead to progress and learning. One trainee, Emily, felt that the supervisor's feedback matched areas of weakness she had perceived herself and was ready to recognise:

*'Luckily whenever they were giving me negative or constructive feedback on my teaching, it was always something that I'd thought 'No, there was something wrong with that' or 'I'm not quite sure about the link between that'. So it was always something that I suppose I'd thought about as well.'*

Emily, perhaps due to her own reflections, already had dawning awareness of certain weaknesses and was moving towards conscious incompetence before the feedback was given. In this sense she was in a strong position to receive the feedback, since it crystallised her own thoughts and gave her the opportunity to discuss ideas to take her teaching forward immediately. The comment by Morell et al describes this well: *'As with any new learning, students must recognise their need to learn before they can embrace new knowledge'* (2002, p532). Successful scaffolding in the feedback session helped her reach her 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978) and ultimately become a more skilled and competent teacher.

The interviewees mentioned above, who appreciated detailed feedback and 'straight talking', were all intrinsically motivated to take the Diploma. In contrast, those who mentioned rejecting

aspects of their tutors' feedback reported only extrinsic motivation. There is insufficient evidence to suggest a direct link, but it is nevertheless interesting. An additional feature common to those who rejected aspects of the tutors' feedback is that each had more pre-course teaching experience (ranging from five to ten years) than others so their practice may have been more adept and their identity as a teacher more fixed. Joanne mentioned her response to criticism about how she moved in the classroom:

*'I pace a lot, which is completely true. But I can't not. I pace up and down. That was one of the criticisms. It keeps the students moving and on their toes. I'm not a standing person, I just don't do that. And I have no intention of changing so I didn't accept it. But the other things – I should justify what I do, I should monitor more, and my boardwriting is rubbish, I totally accept.'*

There were certain things she was not prepared to change because she saw them as a fixed part of her teaching persona. Bailey (2006, chapter 7) states that many factors can cause teachers not to heed advice in post-observation conferences: not finding the feedback relevant or credible, not sharing the same beliefs and experience as the supervisor, and not wishing to lose face. For Joanne it may have been a mixture of all of these, hence the strength of feeling in her comment.

One clear reason for resistance to feedback from course tutors was that the latter were not themselves regulars in the classroom:

*'It's hard to take feedback from people who haven't been inside the classroom for so long, so we just tended to let that run off our backs...They weren't useful. It was the other people, the people who had hands-on, day-to-day experience. That was useful.'* (Gordon)

The Diploma course is a blend of theory and practice; course tutors are expected to have a sound knowledge of the theoretical aspects of teaching English as a Foreign Language, but they are clearly also expected to be practising teachers who are themselves inspiring models. This relates to the theme of integrity as described more fully in the next section. Bailey (2006, p150) talks of the importance of supervisors creating the conditions whereby trainees feel they



can respect them. She does not specifically mention the need for supervisors to be good teachers in order to win this respect, but does talk of their '*expert power*'.

At several points in the research, the need for integrity, consistency and congruence in tutor modelling has surfaced; it is perhaps the in-service nature of the course which gives rise to these demands. Course participants have some years' experience of teaching themselves and are aware of their own students' demands. It is to be expected that, when EFL teachers become students again on the Diploma course, they in turn will exercise certain expectations of their course tutors.

Giving feedback on assessed lessons is always challenging and can be a sensitive issue; giving feedback to experienced teachers on an in-service course is bound to be even more of a balancing act. One interviewee, Carol, reported how two experienced and confident trainees on her course, both of whom had been teaching for more than five years, were shocked and angry at failing some of the assessed lessons:

*'Some were very experienced and all of a sudden they were failing, and they were shocked and angry and upset...I think they were kind of set in their ways. They'd taught in the same way. They had found their way and it didn't always agree with the people who were observing them.'*

This raises the two issues of how the tutors dealt with experienced trainees who were destabilised and upset, and the ideal length of pre-course experience. There are clearly many issues relating to feedback; it is a crucial part of any Diploma course but the data available in the study is possibly insufficient to provide any conclusive points, since not enough of the interviewees went into detail about it during the interviews. It is not possible to draw any firm conclusions about the link between feedback, motivation, experience and professional teaching identity. This provides a possible direction for further research.

## 6.4 MENTORING

There are several ways in which the dichotomy between assessment and development can be addressed. The regular observation of candidates' teaching and the provision of constructive feedback as a developmental rather than assessment tool, in other words, watching participants outside the framework of assessments, is one method of allowing teachers to develop and to try out new ideas, techniques and methodologies in a safe context. Doug brought up this suggestion:

*'Perhaps there could be more un-assessed lessons...The chance just to do things a few times and then get the assessed lesson. But that would make the course longer...'*

Doug recognised that non-assessed observations, although providing a risk-free environment and therefore better development opportunities, would necessitate administrative changes, not always easy on full-time courses where candidates are not teaching their own students but 'borrowing' classes from the host institution. Part-time courses offer more opportunity for some form of mentoring by a manager or colleague.

One scheme described as useful in several interviews, but which is not a prescribed part of the Diploma, concerns a mentoring-type scheme whereby candidates team-taught with experienced teachers in real classrooms, prior to teaching an assessed lesson with the same group of language learners. This meant that the candidates could get to know the learners before the assessed lesson and could also receive detailed feedback on teaching. The Diploma candidate and the class teacher discussed the planning of the lessons and the Diploma candidate had the opportunity to observe the class teacher in action. Some praised the scheme unreservedly and reported that they had learned from this form of mentoring while others outlined both its benefits and its pitfalls:

1. *'Some teachers were really good, others were obviously not happy to do this and resented the fact that they were already busy and had to work with you....It was only useful for me when the other teacher took it seriously.... '* (Emma)

2. *'One teacher that I worked with, it was wonderful, there was instant chemistry, I loved it. Another teacher, it was in no way obstructive, it was just nothing...It could be because the person had no time or no interest or perhaps no particular ability in that area whereas the other person was 'What do you think about that? Why did you do that then?'.... and I wanted to talk to this person for hours. It was so interesting to discuss the whys and wherefores.'* (Rick)

Both Emma and Rick could see the learning opportunity but felt that it was not always exploited to the full. The data suggests that, whilst the scheme is an excellent idea in theory, in practice for it to be successful it requires the co-operation of teachers who are willing to join in and who have been given both training and time to dedicate to the scheme. These issues are reflected in the literature. Brooks and Sikes caution that *'Not everyone can, or should be, a mentor'* (1997, p66). Hobson (2002) talks of the variability of mentoring quality and Arnold, E. (2006) bemoans the lack of time available.

Another aspect of mentoring involved receiving help in constructing lesson plans for the assessed lessons. The lesson plan is an important document; firstly it is also assessed as part of the teaching assignment, and secondly a strong lesson plan is more likely than a flawed plan to lead to a good lesson (Emma makes this clear: *'I think it's really true that if you've got a good lesson plan, you've got a good lesson. You can't really go wrong'*). A substantial number of interviewees mentioned lesson plans. Carol, for example, highlighted how help with her plans had developed her teaching:

*'Lesson planning was very good. I got a lot of help with that. And I really do think that that's what made me a good teacher afterwards, was just being thoughtful and thinking about a lesson and the stages of a lesson and why you would do things and how you would do things'.*

In contrast, Rick actually described the helping process:

*'I found those sessions on our lesson plans before we went in and taught them were superb and most productive. Staff were very skilful in how they combined contributing, asking leading questions, also letting us find our own way through. I think that was rather special, actually.'*

Rick had a strong awareness of the mentoring process and how these skills had helped his development. The blend of contributing ideas, asking questions and letting the trainees find their own way through is reminiscent of the simultaneous combination of support and challenge that is so important in engendering growth in adult students (Daloz, 1986, p213). The combination, as mentioned in the interviewee's comment above, is also a type of scaffolding (Wood et al, 1976). The mentor encouraged the development of local expertise (Wood, 1988, p80), not only by telling or demonstrating, but by scaffolding the process with a mixture of activities.

Two other people were also aware of this kind of help, in that they perceived the lack of this input on their own courses. Alex, for example, when asked if anything had been missing from the course, would like to have had more help with lesson plans:

*'I would have liked to see more interaction on the tutor's part with lesson plans.*

*When we had an observed lesson plan, he sat with us and said 'Now what are you going to do here?'. I would like to have had maybe two or three sessions of him going over the lesson plan with me...Sort of non-judgemental kind of mentoring support..... The course would have been richer if maybe some people who had done the course successfully could have been brought in as mentors.*

*At least people to bounce ideas off.*

Again, the aspects of support and challenge as put forward by Daloz (1986) underly what Alex wanted: a combination of being listened to (ibid, p215) and of engaging in discussion (ibid, p225). All the interviewees quoted in this section understood the value of discussion and recognised that *'Talk ... is central to the mentor's role. A primary purpose of such dialogues is to help the students to engage with different perspectives'* (ibid, p226). Alex recognised the value of learning from experienced teachers. Patrick, although not commenting as specifically, would also have liked more guidance on his teaching:

*'More time with tutors maybe. Maybe a few more clues about where we should have been heading for.... I suppose learning things from somebody who obviously knew quite a lot about it, the more I could have had, the better it would have been'.*

Both understand that an expert can help them reach areas they could not reach alone, and bridge the Vygotskian concept of the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978).

A number of different people are mentioned in this data: course tutors, other experienced EFL teachers, previous Diploma graduates. However, the emphasis appears not necessarily to be on the roles but on the helping processes. With regard to teaching, these included: receiving feedback on teaching in a non-assessed context; sharing a teaching situation with an experienced teacher, discussing lesson-planning and teaching together, experimenting in this shared environment; discussing the general process of teaching with an experienced teacher. Regarding lesson planning, the processes mentioned were: discussing the how/why of lesson planning with an experienced teacher; being given ideas for lesson plans; receiving feedback on plans before using them; being asked guiding questions in order to reach a more successful lesson plan; being supported throughout the process of constructing a lesson plan.

## **6.5 OBSERVATION OF OTHER TEACHERS**

Observation has been mentioned above, in the context of team-teaching with experienced teachers. Observation can also take place on Diploma courses when candidates are given the chance to observe teaching at the host institution and also to see their fellow candidates in action. Two interviewees regretted that they were not given the opportunity for any such observation and felt that an important learning opportunity had been lost. The potential of such an opportunity is confirmed by another respondent:

*'I learned as much from watching my peers as from feedback on my own teaching. Some of them were very good even then'. (Felicity)*

The teacher in Phipps' DELTA study (2007) also found observation of peers to be a useful learning tool. Arranging observations, especially of peers, requires additional work from an administrative point of view but, as observing other teachers is an important developmental aspect, it should be part of any Diploma course. Current Cambridge regulations support this, stating that there should be a minimum of 10 hours of observation as part of the course (Cambridge ESOL website).

## 6.6 COURSE TUTORS

Given that more than half of the interviewees attributed the impact of the course to tutors and tutoring, I analysed in detail all material relating to tutors (Appendix Eleven). I then also analysed the experience of course tutors in relation to other factors such as impact, motivation and professional identity (as explored in Chapter Five). This is demonstrated as a composite sequence analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994) in Appendix Twelve, which identifies eight different routes taken through the course from pre-course factors to outcomes. In phenomenographic terms, although each individual teacher had their own unique experience, this demonstrates the variations in perception within the whole group regarding these aspects of the course.

### Importance of tutors

For the substantial majority of interviewees, the tutors played a crucial role in the course experience, probably far more than the tutors themselves realised. One such comment, typical of those made, was:

*'They made a big impact on me. I think they're vital. It would have been a completely different experience if I hadn't had such good tutors..... That's really why I liked it, because the tutors were good'. (Carol)*

Diploma participants, having gained their own teaching experience, were in the student role again so had certain expectations of their tutors. It is probable that many participants had not had much opportunity for peer observation or mentoring so may have really appreciated the potentially valuable and stimulating input that a good tutor can provide.

Almost half of the interviewees in the Diploma study emphasised a need for variety in the teaching team and suggested that this provided different teaching models and mitigated against potential negative experiences of tutors.

### Negative experiences

A small group of people, Alex, Gordon and Anna (see Chapter Five, and mentioned again here in order to show connections in their stories), stood out as reporting a clearly more

negative experience of course tutors than the others (see Appendix Twelve), and only Anna reported any 'deep' outcomes (see pp80-81 for explanation of 'deep' outcomes). Appendix Seven shows Alex's transcript, while Gordon commented:

*'The tutors...had pretensions to theoretical knowledge and rammed that particular side of it down our throat ...So one of the main bones of contention was that X, who was running the course, was just using it for his own intents and purposes to self-aggrandise himself. So that was the first point of conflict...'*

There followed a number of other comments to this effect, one of which is detailed below in the section 'Integrity and congruence'. Anna had a very negative experience in her post-observation feedback sessions (see p122 above) and also in the training sessions (see p134 below). None of these interviewees mentioned any of the tutor qualities discussed below, except in a negative sense.

Although Alex, Gordon and Anna comprise only a small fraction of the sample, and other factors are clearly implicated (Chapter Five), their Diploma narrative was quite different from other interviewees. It is possible that the experience of course tutors could constitute an important help or hindrance to learning. This view appears to be supported by those other interviewees who believed that impact was affected positively by tutors and tutoring.

One of the two triangulation interviewees, Michael (represented by the dotted black line in Appendix Twelve), rated the tutors as highly professional and organised but called the whole experience '*safe, non-interactive and non-developmental*'. Although Michael introduced a new 'route' in terms of phenomenographic variation, this nevertheless underlines the importance of tutors, and a social constructivist pathway to learning.

### **Integrity and congruence**

The data summary (Appendix Eleven) shows that integration of the personal and professional, and genuine personal warmth and interest in the students were perceived as important factors in many people's learning experience and therefore also the potential long-term impact of such

courses. Anna devoted a lot of 'airtime' in the interview to talking about the tutors, noticing a lack of professional integrity:

*'There was no balance of feedback in sessions...We're taught as teachers to give a balance of positive and negative feedback to students but my feelings about this course were 95% negative'.*

Although extremely negative and not necessarily representative, they were not the only negative comments and should not be totally disregarded.

Gordon was at pains to point out that he respected tutors who were themselves practising classroom teachers:

*'Let's have it much more hands-on, run by people who know what they're doing in the classroom and who have a good knowledge of the theory but know when to apply it and when to bring it in to the learning sessions'.*

This mirrors a comment made by Freedman in her evaluation of the TEFL Diploma: *'In some centres trainers lack a varied background in TEFL, or have been out of the classroom so long that they are unable to bridge the gap between recent theories and classroom practice'* (1985, p138). As mentioned before, the interview data in the current study suggests that course tutors are expected to have a sound knowledge of the theoretical aspects of TEFL, but are clearly also expected to be good classroom teachers. Other people had a more positive experience, saying that the tutors were excellent models. The idea of trainer modelling is reflected in the literature. Hayes (1995) advises using trainers who are themselves teachers. Freeman (1994) makes clear that the 'how' is as important as the 'what', and that *'Teacher-learners should be taught as they are expected to teach'* (1994, p15). Phipps, in his DELTA study, does not come down so clearly in favour of trainer modelling, but does suggest that DELTA courses should *'provide real examples of alternative practice'* (2007, p15). Freedman (1985, p252), in an evaluation of TEFL Diploma courses, recommends that teaching approaches reflect a learner-centred approach since this is the target for the classroom.

## **Engagement**

One interviewee, Olivia, remembers one of her tutors as being:



*'not as engaged or interested in us as the other. So, because he wasn't as engaged, he wasn't as engaging. He was aloof and just getting through it. He was already on his way to his next job. I can't remember any of his sessions, but I remember loads of the other tutor's. I think lack of engagement has a long-term effect on your memory'.*

This is echoed by several interviewees but contrasts with other comments such as

- *'They were passionate about teaching'* (Sarah)

- *'They created a good atmosphere, anything but unfriendly'*. (James)

Freedman's research participants (1985) also valued enthusiasm and commitment in their TEFL Diploma trainers. When a trainer's enthusiasm and attention are not engaged in 'the here and now' with the trainees, this is clearly palpable to the trainees, particularly on a course concerned with teacher development. Again, this relates to the concept of tutor modelling and congruence. Module Two of the new DELTA Syllabus (from the Cambridge ESOL website) includes in its candidate learning outcomes:

*'Create conditions that help establish a safe learning environment and maintain a good rapport with and between learners and foster a constructive learning atmosphere'* (p12)

and the indicative course content at this point in the syllabus specifications reads:

*'Teaching manner, qualities and personal style (e.g. authenticity, empathy etc), the quality of relationship and interaction in the classroom (e.g. respect, rapport, affective issues etc)'* (p12)

If trainees are expected and required to create rapport and engage with their learners on an affective level, they clearly expect similar engagement from their course tutors.

## **Understanding**

Appreciation was shown for tutors who were understanding and supportive. Jane, talking of a tutor who appeared distanced from the students, went on to say:

*'Then there was the one who was more on our level, more sympathetic or empathetic of where we were at'.*

Emma commented:

*'I think we felt that some were a bit more forgiving or patient than others'.*

Such comments suggest that support and understanding are highly valued characteristics. The Diploma course is perceived as a stressful experience; anything which eases this is bound to be welcome. The tutor qualities of integrity, congruence, engagement and understanding appear remarkably similar to Carl Rogers' core conditions of congruence/genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and empathy (quoted in Corey 1990, p207). Rogers, A. (1996, p165), discussing adult education, talks of warmth, directness and enthusiasm as being important features of the class climate when teaching adults, and of these being the responsibility of the teacher. Arnold, J., writing in the field of language learning, makes a clearer link between these two concepts, believing that affective factors can affect learning (1999).

I would therefore argue that, although the characteristics of understanding and empathy are not crucial in a teacher educator, both the data and the literature suggest that, when they are present, trainees have a greater likelihood of feeling valued and accepted, and that, in the particularly stressful atmosphere of the full-time Diploma, this can considerably smooth and facilitate their learning experience.

## **6.7 FELLOW COURSE PARTICIPANTS**

### **The importance of fellow participants**

On a face-to-face course with very little lecture-style teaching and substantial task-based, experiential and reflective activity the other course participants can play a significant role in the learning process. Add to this the intensity and stress of the experience, be this the full-time intensive course or the part-time version (undertaken alongside job responsibilities), and the other course members can become crucial to the overall experience.

### **Group learning and support**

What comes through very strongly in the data is that good experiences of fellow participants enhanced the learning considerably. One interviewee even credited the group work as being the main factor influencing the impact of the course. Over half of the interview sample

mentioned positive experiences of group learning; many of these cited this as being one of the factors which influenced the impact of the course on their subsequent teaching. It likely that this may also have been due to the diverse teaching backgrounds of the other members, and the cross-pollination of ideas resulting from this diversity. The context of TEFL is widely distributed; both the coursework and the examination require knowledge of several teaching contexts. Studying in the company of a range of people who have taught in a variety of countries/contexts encourages a very fertile learning environment. Eraut's notion that co-learners in a CPD arena '*bring different knowledge and perspectives*' (1994, p13) is particularly pertinent to the Diploma course.

A number of people remembered discussions both inside and outside class and many valued them:

*'I liked doing the course with other teachers. I hadn't had so many opportunities to talk to people in that way before'. (Jane)*

This is a typical example of several such quotations, suggesting that this was the first time that tacit, intuitive knowledge was being articulated. Becoming part of a community of practice (Wenger, 1999) was clearly perceived as a source of learning. This confirms claims made earlier that learning on the DELTA course followed a social constructivist form of knowledge development with co-learners scaffolding each other's learning. This resonates with Day who points out that CPD needs '*extended critical engagement with peers and others*' (1999, p205) and Dadds who also emphasises the possibilities of '*exchange, critique, exploration and formulation of new ideas*' (1997, p36).

For the interviewees the Diploma course meant returning to education in the role of learner. Several appreciated the learning which arose from sharing books, discussing ideas and sources for assignments and studying together for the final examination. Again, this resonates with Eraut's notions of co-operative learning: '*share burdens of finding, scanning and degutting learning resources...*' (1994, p13) and supports the claims by Hayes (1995) and Singh and Richards (2006) that ELT in-service learning should be co-operative.

Fellow course participants provide not only learning opportunities but also a source of support. Stress was a major feature of the course for many people and co-learners were cited as the main form of support when dealing with this burden. Eraut states that co-learners can provide '*mutual psychological support and motivation*'. (1994, p13).

## **Summary**

This chapter has shown those features of the learning process which appear to have had a beneficial effect, such as part-time learning, reflection, and an experiential and interactive approach taken by tutors. The data has also highlighted the role played by other people in the learning process, whether through mentoring, observation, modelling, sharing learning resources or providing support through stressful experiences. The concluding chapter draws together the threads which have been woven throughout the thesis and speculates on the nature of a hybrid course and how this might affect its outcomes, offering a number of professional recommendations based on the data which has emerged from the study.

## CHAPTER SEVEN:

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 CONCLUSIONS

##### Overall

There was considerable variation in 'journeys' through the Diploma experience. Broadly, eight different journey types were perceived within this group of teachers (Appendix Twelve). The interviewees' experience can be represented as a continuum, with life-changing impact at one end, a pedestrian experience at the other and varying degrees of experience in between.

##### Impact

Although the degree of impact varied, virtually everyone acknowledged that they had benefited considerably from the course. The perspective of the majority was that impact of the DELTA is substantial, sustained and relevant to subsequent teaching practice. This is a fundamentally optimistic picture of CPD and in line with researchers such as Powell et al (2003), Day (1999), Inglis et al (1992), Cope et al (1992), Bradley and Howard (1992), Williams, R. (2005) and Burchell et al (2002).

The five main areas of impact found in the data (Figure 4.1, p72) extended to: (a) propositional knowledge; (b) practical classroom aspects; (c) personal and psychological aspects; (d) organisational aspects; and (e) aspects relating to the wider TEFL profession. This shows some parallels with Harland and Kinder's typology (1997). The impact described by interviewees was sometimes delayed, a finding in accord with Freeman (1989), Prosser et al (2006) and Knight (2006).

A key accomplishment I would claim for the present study is a five-part typology of impact depth (Figure 4.4, p78): changed beliefs and values; changed teaching persona; development of reflective skills; development of critical thinking skills; and identifying the course as a key developmental experience.

## **Background to taking the course**

Interviewees' motivation could be categorised into three broad types: extrinsic motivation, relating to institutions; extrinsic motivation, for personal reasons; and intrinsic motivation. A key finding was that those who gave intrinsic reasons ultimately described deep outcomes which corresponded to at least two of the five 'inner core' areas of deep impact described above (Figure 5.2, p102).

Where intrinsic motivation was absent or unacknowledged, deep impact was possible but less predictable. A key issue here is receptivity to learning: those who cited intrinsic reasons for taking the course were almost, by definition, receptive to learning from the outset. Those whose arrival on the programme was for extrinsic reasons often had to develop this 'receptivity' during the course.

A curious finding was that those interviewees who already had a strong professional self-identity before coming on the programme, and were therefore more confident of their skills, were least likely to describe 'deep' impact, and more likely to describe clashes of perspective with the course tutors. In this sense the DELTA appears to function better for those seeking a stronger sense of professional identity.

Virtually all those interviewed stressed that substantial prior teaching experience, before coming on the course, was the vital bedrock for learning on the DELTA.

## **Learning experiences**

Highly favoured modes of learning were: discussion, interaction, experiential learning, reflection, mentoring, modelling, receiving constructive feedback on teaching practice. Transmission of propositional knowledge was not favoured by anyone in the study. This relates to the writings of Williams, M. (2003), Williams, R. (2005), Singh and Richards (2006), Lamb (1995), Roberts (1998), Gaudart (1994), Freeman (1994) and Kolb (1993).

Feedback on assessed practice was seen as a key learning tool, but the quality of feedback often came in for criticism. Some trainees identified a lack of balance between the positive and the negative, and many felt that positive feedback was as vital in language teacher education as in language teaching. Mentoring support, both during and following the course, was felt to be relevant and valuable by many interviewees, although this is not always offered by institutions.

The DELTA tutors, and their teaching styles, were universally experienced as critical to the success of the exercise. 'Good' tutors were seen as excellent models, enthusiastic about the DELTA course, providing good positive feedback and a lot of support, and inspirational to the trainees. 'Poor' tutors were seen as those who were not engaged, those who lectured, those who tended mainly to give negative feedback, those who were incongruent in their teaching styles and those who failed to acknowledge existing skills and prior learning. Thus the requirements of a DELTA tutor, if the programme is to run successfully, are much more than technical competence in their field of education.

Fellow course participants were also seen as important in a successful DELTA programme. Some interviewees even said that their learning from other students was the most important aspect of their learning. This connects with writing by Day (1999), Dadds (1997) and Eraut (1994). This suggests also that some attention to group cohesion is an important aspect of the DELTA tutor's role.

### **Developmental continuity**

The possible explanations for impact lead to a tentative theory of developmental continuity, in other words, suggestions as to why and in what circumstances CPD has a chance of working. Further research would need to be conducted to establish whether this theory holds or not, but it is consistent with the data in the present study. In Chapter Five I discussed the PRACTICE – THEORY – PRACTICE model. The data suggests that CPD is most effective when the two transition phases, at the beginning and the end of the course (and model), are both smooth

and pro-actively managed, that is, professional development is seen to have continuity. In the case of the DELTA, the pre-course transition has continuity if (see Chapter Five):

- *participants are independently motivated (whether intrinsic or extrinsic)*
- *participants' professional self-identity is such that they recognise their own learning needs in relation to the DELTA*
- *pre-course experience is sufficient to be a basis for effective learning*
- *the DELTA provides opportunities to bring learning from prior practice into the course experience, and to draw upon this during the course.*

The post-course transition has continuity if DELTA graduates (see Chapter Four):

- *can work in an establishment where their qualification and new-found skills are recognised*
- *can start to apply the learning from the course to their practice*
- *have the chance for their increased motivation, enthusiasm and changed professional identity to consolidate and flourish (in the ideal world with support in the form of mentoring).*

A key point is that the impact of the course is determined not solely by the course itself but also by important pre- and post-course factors.

### **A hybrid model of CPD and its wider implications**

The solidity of this PRACTICE – THEORY – PRACTICE model is further supported by the fact that the DELTA offers a 'complete' package or an 'integrated unit'. The DELTA has the characteristics of a pre-service professional education course in that it involves academic learning, pedagogical learning and classroom training (see Chapter Four). However, in contrast to the 'front-loading' of theory on many initial professional education courses, criticised by writers such as Eraut (1994) and Freeman (1994, 2002), the DELTA takes place *after* teachers have already started their teaching careers, with the result that the theoretical learning on the course is seen as more relevant and can be better integrated into their practical classroom experience.

In this sense the DELTA is a hybrid model of professional development, an in-service course with pre-service characteristics, and is consistent with Eraut's claim that '*the potential of work-related ... mid-career professional education is underestimated*' (1994, p12). The receptivity to



in-service learning generated by prior teaching experience, as many participants in this study have testified, together with the opportunity during the course to integrate theory and practice, to which they also bore witness, provide a potentially solid foundation for impact to take place. Although this study was specific to the DELTA context, it is nevertheless possible that this hybrid model may contain some pointers to the ways in which CPD in general could be developed in other fields of education in the future.

## **Methodology**

The theme of 'retrospective' perceptions proved to be a viable method of accessing material. Although Bennett (1999) was investigating adults' perceptions of their schooling, there are considerable parallels in this respect: *'...retrospective autobiographical reflection offers a different kind of perspective on the meaning and benefits of formal education than that offered by other forms of evaluation. With the advantage of both hindsight and maturity, and with the ability to apply the 'test of time', adults can more easily identify the worth of both key features and critical phases in their earlier schooling'* (p173).

Although other methods may well have been possible, the phenomenographic case study also proved to be a satisfactory way of approaching the subject area of this project, given its particular emphasis on collective experience, and recurrent or shared themes.

The viability of semi-structured interviews had already been established at the pilot stage. The main study also showed that the interview process was not merely fruitful from a research perspective but also represented a meaningful exercise for the interviewees themselves. Many said they had both enjoyed and gained something from taking part in the study.

## **7.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

It should be borne in mind that the study has a number of limitations:

- There were no interview questions specifically relating to learning processes, professional self-identity and post-course transitions, which, upon analysing the data, appear to be

concepts of some importance in the study. This is perhaps one of the weaknesses of an exploratory study but does suggest a direction for further research.

- Due to the limitations of part-time doctoral study and full-time work, the main study interviews were held within a relatively short time period with only transcription time in between. More time between interviews to analyse/ponder/read would have been useful. Transcribing the interviews did provide some thinking time but this was only ever fleeting in the circumstances.
- The possibility of bias existed since I interviewed four of my own students. However, I have been transparent about this and I believe they were very honest in what they said (their transcripts certainly do not read any more positively than the others; in fact, they are quite blunt about some of the more negative issues).
- The research method uses only interviews, but it is difficult to access retrospective perceptions in any other way. I have tried to use DELTA documentation where appropriate and have also checked the findings with two other DELTA-qualified teachers.

### **7.3 PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

I present this in three sections: to the DELTA validating body, to DELTA course providers and to prospective DELTA trainees.

#### **A. TO CAMBRIDGE ESOL (DELTA VALIDATING/AWARDING BODY)**

##### **1. Previous teaching experience**

In view of the findings reported in Chapter Five, previous teaching experience appears to be an important foundation on which to base the DELTA learning experience. It is therefore advisable that the importance of sufficient experience should continue to be emphasised.

The Cambridge ESOL webpages pertaining to the old, now superseded (since September 2008), DELTA suggest that two years is a recommended minimum. The webpages pertaining to the new DELTA modules (see Appendix One for more details), however, state that *'Candidates ... will normally have an initial ELT qualification and will have had at least a year's ELT experience but these are not requirements'* (my emphasis) and *'...previous*

*teaching experience is strongly recommended... This is to ensure that candidates have sufficient prior knowledge and experience to benefit from the course'* (p4). The Handbook (p3) also states that for Modules 1 and 3 teaching experience is recommended but that for Module Two ('Developing Professional Practice') it is required.

Although the Cambridge ESOL website still suggests a minimum period of pre-course teaching experience, this has been reduced by a year, and more is being left to the course providers' discretion. The website makes a brief statement (see previous paragraph) about the link between the course and prior teaching experience but does not make clear how important this is to the integration of theory and practice during the course. Reducing the recommended prior experience to one year may not be advantageous since teachers are likely still to be at the 'survival stage' of teaching. In addition, they are likely only to have experienced one teaching context; being able to relate new learning to more than one context allows for better integration of learning and a stronger foundation upon which to address the demands of the written assignments.

## **2. Course tutors**

Chapter Six demonstrates that it was not only tutor knowledge and skills which were deemed important; tutor qualities such as engagement, enthusiasm and understanding, and behaviours such as modelling and supporting were also viewed as highly relevant. Cambridge ESOL produces thorough stipulations on the extensive training that new DELTA course tutors must undertake before being accepted as authorised course tutors. While these clear training guidelines are praiseworthy in their detail, it may be useful to highlight the interpersonal and affective as well as cognitive aspects of being a tutor. This is reflected in Freedman's recommendation (1985, p252) that Diploma trainers needed '*interpersonal training in which communication skills are fostered*'.

## **3. Modes of learning**

Certain DELTA modules may now be offered on-line (see Appendix One). It would be helpful if these include discussion forums that are both tutor-mediated and non-tutor-mediated. Chapter

Six of the thesis has shown that interaction with fellow students was perceived useful in both scaffolding learning and providing much-needed emotional support. Course providers of both on-line and face-to-face courses could also pair/group participants so that they have a formal opportunity for peer support during their course.

#### **4. Research course impact**

Given that Cambridge ESOL view DELTA as their '*flagship teaching qualification*' (Zeronis, 2007, p4), perhaps the time has come for them to conduct some large-scale research of their own into the impact of the DELTA. When considering major changes to the structuring of the DELTA, Cambridge ESOL conducted a wide-ranging evaluation and review process (Zeronis, 2007, p5). The DELTA was modularised as a result (see Appendix One). Once the new Delta modules have been running for several years, the time might be ripe for Cambridge ESOL to commission an independent research study, possibly a comparison of perceptions between those who took the new modular DELTA and those who took the previous, non-modular version. Chapter Four of this thesis suggests that there is some considerable perceived impact; it would be worthwhile for this to be confirmed/refuted on a wider scale, not simply as an evaluation study but as an investigation into the value of the DELTA for its graduates and the learning outcomes generated by the course, in the manner of Bird et al (2005), Butcher and Sieminski (2006), or Powell et al (2003).

### **B. TO DELTA COURSE PROVIDERS**

#### **PRE-COURSE**

##### **1. Pre-course experience**

Candidates should have sufficient pre-course experience (see point 1, pp144-145).

##### **2. Readiness**

Chapter Five suggests that motivation needs to be in place if the applicants are to be able to engage with the course in sufficient depth for the impact to be substantial. This can be discussed at interview, but schools should engage with their own teachers about their

readiness to take the course, and if possible facilitate the emergence of personal motivation without 'pushing' them.

One way of helping to manage participants' expectations and stimulate receptivity towards the professional learning experience may be to include on a course website transcripts or audio texts with DELTA graduates discussing the professional changes they experienced and the best way to prepare for the course.

### **3. Pre-course tasks**

Pre-course tasks could be set which encourage teachers to reflect on their teaching. This might help to strengthen motivation and sharpen feelings of receptivity towards professional development, but the findings in Chapter Five also suggest that relating learning to previous experience was a common process. Raising awareness of the complex factors which make up any teaching context may help to lay in place the foundation upon which this integration process can be based.

## **DURING THE COURSE**

### **1. The course teaching team (Chapter Six)**

A teaching team should comprise at least three tutors (Freedman [1985, p252] also recommends '*more than one or two trainers*'), all of whom, as far as possible: have recent classroom experience; keep up-to-date with methodology/techniques; have been trained in giving post-observation feedback to experienced teachers; have an understanding of both adult and teacher learning; adopt a personal teaching style where they engage both on an individual and group level with course participants, and value what participants bring to the course.

### **2. Learning processes (Chapter Six)**

A programme should include a variety of different learning processes, with lecturing kept to a minimum. Participants should be encouraged to capitalise on their own learning styles and strengths, and on supporting/learning from each other.

### **3. Exploring pre-course experience (Chapter Five)**

A programme should explore not only beliefs, but also participants' previous experience. Participants should be explicitly helped to relate new learning to previous experience and vice versa, and to adopt/modify new learning so that it is relevant to their work situation.

### **4. Mentoring (Chapter Six)**

An ideal programme should provide support for improving teaching, also recommended by Freedman (1985, p252), as training alone is not enough (Elmore, 2000, p47). A mentoring scheme where course participants share a teaching situation with experienced teachers is ideal. The helping processes should include: receiving feedback on non-assessed teaching; planning and teaching lessons together; being supported through the process of constructing a lesson plan.

## **POST-COURSE**

### **Post-course support**

DELTA graduates should continue to be supported in their post-course teaching, since it has been shown that impact is not necessarily immediate and the potential benefits are vulnerable unless the process is fully supported. In addition, academic managers should utilise the enthusiasm, motivation and confidence that many DELTA graduates bring to their teaching, through asking them to mentor other teachers and expanding their roles in other ways.

## **C. TO PROSPECTIVE DELTA COURSE PARTICIPANTS**

These recommendations form different types of 'preparedness' for the DELTA experience.

### **1. When to take the Diploma course**

The findings in Chapter Five suggest that it is helpful if prospective participants feel 'ready' and are not simply undertaking the course at the behest of an employer. If participants can be honest with themselves about their motivations for doing the course, this may help them and their tutors. Future DELTA participants would do well to reflect on the most appropriate time for their own professional and life circumstances.

Developing receptivity to a professional development experience may be helped by talking to another person in the same position, and talking to more experienced colleagues who have already taken the DELTA course (as Chapter Five suggests that motivation can be socially constructed).

## **2. Managing expectations: Possibility of major changes**

Prospective DELTA candidates should be prepared for change and for honest and constructive feedback on their teaching. The findings in Chapter Six show that this is not always easy; being prepared in advance may help to ease the process.

## **3. Managing expectations: Types of change**

Chapter Four shows that impact can come in many forms. Trainees can organise their own expectations of the course by reflecting on the areas where change might happen, the areas in which they feel learning ‘needs’ to take place, and the kind of knowledge/skills/behaviours/approaches they would like to acquire. One means of achieving this might be to analyse their own lessons in a structured way, for example, why certain approaches/techniques/materials seem to ‘work’ or not ‘work’ in class. Talking to former DELTA participants, especially if they are familiar colleagues, about the impact they perceived might also help to clarify, organise and widen expectations of the course.

## **4. Professional identity (Chapter Five)**

Pre-Diploma teachers might benefit from reflecting on their own professional identity as an EFL teacher. In their own view, where do they see themselves, both on their own career trajectory and also on the teaching trajectory from novice to advanced teacher? Where are they now and where would they ultimately like to be? How closely do they identify themselves with the overall community of EFL practitioners and with their own teaching community?

## **5. Preparation for integrating theory and practice**

DELTA trainees may benefit from reading EFL methodology books and attending teacher development sessions prior to the course, and from trying to relate what they read/hear to their

own teaching. The purposes are partly to familiarise themselves with concepts/terminology, but more importantly to begin the process (Chapter Five) of anchoring new learning within their own prior knowledge and experience.

## **6. Learning styles (Chapter Six)**

Before/during the course Diploma participants could consider how they normally prefer to learn. They need to optimise what works best for them while remaining open to other methods. When making the choice of whether to take a full-time, part-time or distance learning option (see Appendix One), this point should also be borne in mind.

## **7. Integrating theory and practice**

During the course it is advisable for DELTA participants to keep their own learners in mind. The findings in Chapter Five suggest that interviewees learned through relating new ideas to their own prior teaching and the context(s) with which they were familiar.

## **8. Seeking professional support during the course**

If mentoring support is not provided as part of the course structure, participants could seek out another EFL teacher with whom they can discuss ideas, lesson plans and new theoretical concepts. Although they will no doubt gain help from fellow participants, interacting with another person who is not undergoing the same experience might provide the mentoring opportunity that the interviewees in this study so appreciated (Chapter Six) and which many writers advocate (for example, Day, 1999; Elmore, 2000; Dadds, 1997; Singh and Richards, 2006).

## **7.4 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTION**

Undertaking this research study has been an invaluable learning experience. I have gained some understanding of the nature of research and of the cyclical, sometimes messy, nature of the research process. I have learned, for example, that things do not fit neatly into categories and that research can be frustrating and sometimes tedious, yet at other times immensely rewarding and even exhilarating.



This research study has also provided some key ideas which have helped me examine my own professional values, and guidelines for possible changes to my own future practice. As well as adopting the course provider recommendations above for DELTA courses, I intend to explore further the impact of other teacher education courses with which I may be involved, since I now have a growing awareness of how impact might be affected by process factors. I have also begun to question how my colleagues and I come across as course tutors, how much attention we pay to our participants' beliefs about teaching, how much we value what they bring to the classroom and the role that affective factors might play in relation to participants' experiences of our teacher education courses. The research process has also encouraged me to view my own TEFL context within the wider educational field and has provided a wealth of resources from which we can learn in order to improve the quality of TEFL teacher education and development.

## **Final words**

Whatever criticisms of the DELTA have been made by the participants in this study, the strongest single theme in their evaluations of their own learning is that this is a sound, valuable, well-integrated programme, containing most of the key ingredients of successful learning and development, and which none of the twenty interviewees regretted having taken. My own view, today, is that this fundamentally optimistic picture nevertheless leaves the DELTA as fruitful ground for further study aimed at refining the programme to the point where it is a model of educational excellence.

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# APPENDIX ONE: BACKGROUND TO CELTA AND DELTA

## Explanation of abbreviations

- *TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (This does **not** cover the EAL service in UK primary and secondary schools: English as an Additional Language)*
- *TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*
- *DELTA: Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults*
- *CELTA: Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults*
- *Cambridge ESOL: the validation board for the DELTA/CELTA qualifications*
- *CPD: Continuing Professional Development      INSET: In-service Education and Training*
- *f/t: full-time; p/t: part-time*

## Background to CELTA

The Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) is one of a portfolio of certificates administered by Cambridge ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), an exam board offering language exams for learners of English at all levels of proficiency, and teaching certificates for those teaching (or planning to teach) English as a foreign language. The course leading to the CELTA certificate can be taken at a large number of approved establishments both within the UK and further afield. Such courses can be undertaken both full-time (usually lasting 4-5 weeks) and part-time (lasting anything up to a year). Course participants are generally self-funding. A similar Certificate qualification is also offered by Trinity College Examining Board, another validation body; both are equally recognised (see below). The CELTA is often the course of choice for British people wishing to teach English abroad, although applicants with English as a second language are also welcomed, providing their English is of a proficiency level sufficient to cope with the course. The certificate is designed as a pre-service qualification, although sometimes attracts those who have already been teaching EFL for several years without a specific qualification. A CELTA certificate is frequently the key specification on job advertisements for overseas teaching jobs. The CELTA was preceded by its forerunner, the CTEFLA (Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults). The CTEFLA became the CELTA in 1998.

## Background to DELTA

Particularly for EFL teachers wishing to work in the UK, although also in many language schools abroad, such as British Council and International House teaching establishments, the Diploma is an important qualification. British Council inspection requirements stipulate, for example, that teachers of EAP courses (English for Academic Purposes) should have '*at least a diploma in ELT/TESOL*' and that at least one member of the management team of any accredited establishment should have '*as a minimum, a diploma-level ELT/TESOL qualification*' (British Council website: [www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation-about-us-purposes.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation-about-us-purposes.htm) Accreditation Handbook, pp25-26).

The DELTA course can be taken at approved institutions both within the UK and abroad, and can be undertaken full-time (usually lasting approximately 11-12 weeks), part-time face-to-face (lasting anything up to 2 years) or by distance learning. Course participants are for the most part self-funding, although very occasionally an establishment such as the British Council may sponsor one of its own non-DELTA-qualified staff to take a DELTA course offered at a British Council location. The DELTA was preceded by its forerunner, the DTEFLA (Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults). The DTEFLA became the DELTA in 1998. A similar Diploma qualification is also offered by Trinity College Examining Board, another validation body; both are equally recognised for British Council inspection purposes as both meet the inspection criteria ([www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation-about-us-purposes.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation-about-us-purposes.htm) Accreditation Handbook, pp46-47).

According to Butler (2009), the number of teachers taking the Diploma in recent years has fallen; she attributes this to the cost of the Diploma in relation to EFL salaries, and to the fact that there are not enough centres offering the modular Diploma, which is a new approach to taking the course. This was instigated by Cambridge ESOL (the Cambridge Diploma validating body) in December 2008 in order to make the qualification more accessible and offer teachers the opportunity of spreading the cost of a course over a longer period, since each module can be taken separately. Butler also mentions the increasing availability of distance Diploma

courses and suggests that these might address both the cost issue and the lack of access to Diploma courses for those teachers working in certain parts of the world, notably Asia.

## **New DELTA**

**(all the information on this page was taken/adapted from the Cambridge ESOL website)**

Instead of offering DELTA as one complete course (as has been the case up to 2008), from September 2008 Cambridge ESOL has divided the DELTA into 3 modules, which can be taken separately:

*'Module 1 focuses on the background to teaching and learning*

*Module 2 focuses on developing professional practice*

*Module 3 focuses on a specialist option'*

More details available from: [www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/teaching-awards/delta-modular.html](http://www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/teaching-awards/delta-modular.html)

Teaching award centres may choose to continue to offer these modules as one integrated course, or offer them as separate modular courses. Modules 1 and 3 may be offered full-time/part-time/face-to-face/online/blended, depending on each individual centre. These courses do not need to be approved by Cambridge ESOL. Module 2 requires assessment of teaching practice; only teaching centres which have been approved by Cambridge ESOL can deliver Module 2 courses or integrated modular courses which include Module 2. Each of the 3 modules is worth 20 credits. Module 1 is assessed through a written exam. Module 2 is assessed *'through a portfolio of coursework, including observed lessons, background written assignments, and an externally-assessed lesson observation'*. Candidates must attend a course leading to Module 2 so that practice can be assessed. Module 3 is assessed through an extended written assignment. Candidates may choose to attend courses leading to Modules 1 and 3.

## **Scale of DELTA**

Cambridge ESOL does not publish candidate numbers for CELTA and DELTA (personal communication, 18/2/09). However, the number of centres offering these courses throughout the world is available on the Cambridge ESOL website, summarised below.

	CELTA	DELTA		
		Module 1	Module 2	Module 3
Total number of centres worldwide	259	90	52	53
Number of UK centres	96	22	19	19

**Location of centres offering DELTA Module 2**

Location	No of centres	Location	No of centres	Location	No of centres	Location	No of centres
Australia	4	Greece	1	New Zealand	2	Turkey	2
Brazil	2	Hungary	1	Poland	2	UAE	3
Canada	1	Ireland	1	Portugal	1	UK	19
Czech Republic	1	Italy	4	Russian Federation	1	Vietnam	1
Cyprus	1	Malta	1	Spain	4		

## **APPENDIX TWO: BACKGROUND TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **a. Biographical information**

Each interviewee was asked the date, location and nature (full-time or part-time) of their Diploma course.

### **b. The point at which the Diploma was taken**

Several pre-pilot interviewees talked of their reasons for taking the DELTA and gave the view that the Diploma constituted a key learning event in their careers. These ideas prompted reading in the area of career development (e.g. Day, 1999) and the inclusion of this specific question.

### **c. Part-time/full-time**

It was important to investigate whether interviewees in the pilot study and main study echoed sentiments expressed by some in the mini-interviews regarding the advisability of taking the Diploma course part-time as opposed to full-time, and also whether the views expressed in the literature (e.g. Rhodes and Hoghton-Hill, 2000) were confirmed in this study.

### **d. Positive and negative points**

Although it was not clear what type of material might arise, this question aimed to access participants' particular memories which were then followed up in more detail through further probes. Harmer (1988) used these as the main questions in his study on participants' views of their TEFL Certificate course, with good results.

### **e. Theory/practice**

Almost all of the pre-pilot and pilot interviewees mentioned the concepts of theory and practice in some form. Given this, and the fact that this relationship forms the core of any teacher education event, it was included in the interview schedule. The question of values also surfaced in some of the pilot interviews. A question on this topic was included in the main study for this reason, and also because it features in Harland and Kinder's study (1997).

**f. People**

The importance of people in the pre-pilot data led to the inclusion of these questions in later interviews.

**g. Assessment**

This question aimed to gauge how widespread the feelings of stress and negativity were, given that both were striking during the mini-interviews, and to probe the learning generated by the assessment procedure. Also, assessment in some form is a large part of any accredited teaching qualification so it was assumed that participants would have some views on this.

**h. Perceived impact**

Harland and Kinder's (1991) categories 'impact on practice', 'motivational and attitudinal' and 'knowledge and skills' formed the sub-questions under the topic 'perceived impact'. Since this study relies on participants' self-reports, this category of questions was termed 'perceived impact', rather than simply 'impact'. However, I felt that this question as phrased in the pilot and intermediate interviews did not fully access the data needed to answer the research questions. Part of the research aims to determine the perceived impact of the course, yet only one question targeted this and was often hurriedly answered at the end of the interview. In further interviews, the section 'perceived impact' was broken down into sub-questions.



## APPENDIX THREE

### Interview Schedules

#### STAGE ONE

##### Pre-pilot mini-interviews

1. Tell me about your DELTA course.
2. Was there anything you liked or disliked about your DELTA course?
3. Did your DELTA course influence your subsequent teaching? How?

#### STAGE TWO

##### Pilot Study

1. **Biographical information:**
  - a. Which year did you start (and finish) your course?
  - b. Where (country, town and institution) did you take your course?
  - c. How many teaching posts have you held since taking the course? What are they?
2. **The point in your career**
  - a. Can you tell me about your decision to take the DELTA, including its timing in your career?
3. **Part-time/full-time**
  - a. Was your course part-time or full-time?
  - b. Do you have any views on that?
4. **Likes/dislikes**
  - a. What did you like about the course?
  - b. What did you not like about the course?
5. **Theory/practice**

Do you have any views on the theory/practice balance?
6. **People**
  - a. What do you remember about the tutors?
  - b. What do you remember about the other course participants?
7. **Assessment**
  - a. Did you learn from the way you were assessed?
  - b. Was it good assessment practice?
8. **Perceived impact**

Do you think the course had an impact on your teaching?
9. **Other:** Is there anything else that we haven't discussed?

#### STAGE THREE: Main Study

(items in red not supplied to interviewees beforehand)

##### Biographical information:

1. When did you start and finish your course?
  - a. Where and how (f/t or p/t) did you take your course? If abroad, did it suit the local setting?
  - c. Have you been asked about your DELTA experience before?

##### 2. The point in your career

- a. Why did you decide to do the DELTA course?
- b. What influenced your decision to do it at that point in time?

*Others have mentioned that it was a key learning event in their career. Do you view it like that?*

##### 3. Part-time/full-time

Some people have said they liked the p/t study because they could try out their new ideas between sessions. Others preferred f/t study because the intensity suited them. What is your opinion?

##### 4. Positive/negative points

- a. What were the positive points about the course?
- b. What were the negative points?

##### 5. Theory/practice

- a. Do you have any views on the theory/practice balance?
- b. Do you have any views on how the course was taught?
- c. Some people think DELTA told them to teach in a certain way. How about you?
- d. Did you have help with the practical teaching aspects of the course?

##### 6. People

- a. Other people have had many different views on their course tutors. What were your opinions?
- b. Some people have said that their group became quite close-knit during the course. How was yours?

##### 7. Assessment

- a. Do you have any comments about the post-observation feedback sessions?
- b. What did you value about getting feedback on your teaching practice?

##### 8. Perceived impact

- a. Do you think the course had an impact on your teaching?

*If so, why do you think it had an impact? What factors from the course influenced the impact?*

*Some people have said the course increased their motivation. Is that the same for you?*

*Did you use anything from your course in your subsequent teaching? How much was applicable?*

- b. Did you find the course material appropriate to your later teaching contexts?
- c. Did the course help you progress in your career? If so, how?

9. **Other:** Is there anything else that we haven't discussed?

##### General probes:

- Could you say some more about that? What do you mean by that?
- Let me stop you there and make sure I fully understand... Did you say ...?
- How did that come about? Who was involved? When....? Where...? What...?

## APPENDIX FOUR:

### INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO INTERVIEWEES

August 2008

Dear ...

**Re: Research about Cambridge TEFL Diploma Course**

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed for my doctoral research. I really appreciate you giving up your time to do this, especially as I know that the summer is a busy time! The interview shouldn't last longer than 30 minutes.

I'm investigating TEFL teachers' retrospective perceptions of the Diploma courses (DTEFLA/DELTA). I'm interested in what people remember from their Diploma course, what they thought of it and how it impacted on their subsequent teaching and career. Because it's retrospective, I'm interested in interviewing both people who took the course quite recently as well as those who took it in the more distant past, and of course any in between. It doesn't matter if your memory of many aspects of the course is quite sketchy – that in itself is useful data.

As you may know, I am a DELTA tutor myself. However, my role in this research is purely as a doctoral research student; I am separating in my own mind my two roles vis-à-vis the Diploma course and am therefore not looking at what you say from the position of DELTA tutor. Also, my research is being carried out under the auspices of the Open University and has no connection with ... University.

I should also like to stress that all interview material is confidential. In this context, this means that, although I may use ideas and quotations from the interviews in my research write-up, all the data will be anonymised, and nothing you say will be traceable back to you. I will discuss with you in more detail at the beginning of the interview how I will disguise the data.

I enclose a list of the questions I'll ask in the interview; for some people it is a while since they took the Diploma course so perhaps these topics might help them remember some of the details.

Thank you once again and I look forward to talking to you.

Joy Northcott

## APPENDIX FIVE

### PSEUDONYMS OF INTERVIEWEES

Interviewee	'Route' taken as shown in Appendix Twelve
Gordon	orange
Alex	orange
Rachel	pink
James	pink
Doug	grey
Anna	yellow
Mark	pale blue
Carol	red
Olivia	red
Joanne	red
Esther	green
Sarah	green
Emma	green
Felicity	green
Jane	green
Emily	green
Patrick	green
Nina	green
Adam	green
Rick	dark blue
<i>Michael (triangulation interviewee)</i>	<i>black dotted</i>

## APPENDIX SIX: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT ONE

*Has anybody ever asked you about your experience before?*

No. I thought at the end of the course that we were given the q'aire, I thought, that's fine, but in actual fact 6 months later could be much more interesting feedback.

*Tell me why you say that.*

Because it's a very intense period and there's a lot of weighing up of different kinds of information, what's useful and not useful and why and so on. And there's just so much in your head at that stage and I think it's as you measure that against your own experience and your own working situation and practices that things really start to shake down.

*So actually that's quite a good justification for my research, this is why I'm asking people later, when it has shaken down. Tell me why did you decide to do the Dip at that point in your career? Was there anything that sparked off the decision?*

Most people would consider that I did the DELTA rather early, because I'd only been teaching ELT for 18 months, although I had well over the minimum number of hours, but it was still early compared to the time when most people do it. But to me I'd always found, having done the PGCE before in Mod Lang, I found the CELTA very good for what it was but very unsatisfying. And so I was very hungry for more.

*What kind of things were you hungry for?*

I was hungry for more theoretical underpinning, why this, not that. Because the problem I was finding was really impeding my decision-making process, for me to try to think about all of these things that we do discuss and read about and think about in DELTA. I was already trying to do all of that for myself as I taught. It was simpler to get on and do the DELTA.

*So you were really looking for something?*

As a personality I'm a very hungry person, perhaps hungrier than is good for me. But I'm very interested and excited to know lots of things about it. I wanted to know more, I yearned to know more. And really I could hardly wait. I applied speculatively, not thinking I would be accepted.

*You said you were hungry for knowledge and theory. Did you get what you wanted?*

Yes. I found when I left, shortly afterwards I went to a conference, I'd already been doing things like that out of interest, this time I immediately noticed the difference. I could immediately tell in theoretical terms I now had the basic field knowledge to participate. That was very satisfying. It just strengthened my ability to read more swiftly because I now knew more terms. I could recognise the way an argument was going more swiftly. I subscribe to a couple of journals, the ELTJ. I'm very interested in that. It helps me to feed my own stimulation and enjoyment of what I'm doing.

*So it's propelled your own professional development further?*

Yes, it's helped to focus and speed up something I was trying to do on my own but I felt frustrated by the lack of tools. It gave tools in a more concentrated way, to help me make a more quantum leap forwards.

*Whilst we're talking about impact I'm going to go straight to the questions on impact. You talked about the impact on your reading, your knowledge base. Has it also had any kind of practical impact on your teaching?*

My situation has been a bit strange, because what has happened is that shortly after leaving here, I got a promotion then another promotion straight on top of it.

*Was either of these related to having the Dip?*

Well, it must have helped. Yes, it must be directly related to having the Dip, I think. So partly to my regret I've been doing less teaching than I would have expected, so the impact has been on the one hand on my teaching and on the other hand, on my ability to do the other things I do now. First of all, I gained enormously in my ability to work with and help with other teachers. I'm now senior teacher. The result of all of the coaching that we had here, which I found extremely helpful and engaging and fruitful and the results that went along with that. I found that in observing other people, in giving support, constructive feedback and so on, it's not something I find difficult to do at all. I have not had any negative feeling about how teachers have responded to me responding to them. I've been able to give constructive, quite specific feedback. One of the things that has helped me to do that is the sense of frameworks within which to interpret what I'm seeing. So that's one thing. Also there have been workshops which I've given. I've also been involved directly in training teachers as well. Sometimes we get teachers, e.g. two very poor teachers from ... who really need support and help and the chance to observe and discuss the observations. That sort of thing has been a prime part of my job. Also writing courses, I've written a week-long pronunciation course, a very intensive course.

*Do you think you could have done that if you hadn't done the Dip?*

No, I couldn't have. I had the way forward, how to go about it, as well as a whole lot more direct know-how, the technical tools, more knowledge of technical things and a wider knowledge of where to go to get what I need to fill gaps or to do various jobs, so it was enormously enabling.

*And in your actual teaching...*

The sense of a global fuller understanding has affected my teaching in the classroom. I'm not saying before that I taught every lesson for itself, but I now automatically think of a lesson in a context as part of a development. I'm aware that this is a lesson which is slightly different for every person in the class, so I'm trying to take account of that in the way I teach the class. Flagging up what's coming up. Setting what I'm doing in a wider context and trying to build from one thing to another and trying to make explicit to the learners why we're doing what we're doing, what came before and what comes after.

*Do you feel that the learners are responding to this? Are they responding to you with the Dip in a different way from you without the Dip?*

It's difficult to say because I always got good feedback, but I think yes, there is a discernible difference in how secure they feel. I think they can feel the greater knowledge base. I wouldn't want to talk up my knowledge, I'm just trying to do the best job I can and develop as I can. Yes, I think there is a difference and they can feel the difference. When I teach people, I keep getting feedback of 'when are you coming back to us?'. .....

*Is there anything at this stage that you could say, with hindsight, that should have been on the course and wasn't?*

There was one thing that occurred to me recently and I read a book...the techniques he was using involved his whole method revolved around working with some material and then changing the skill, listening to reading to writing, reformulation, using that to check and see what the differences were. This highlighted that, although I think it was implicit and there was a strong silent message in the course, our lessons were a reading lesson, a listening lesson, perhaps that's a necessary part of the learning process. I think we could perhaps have drawn all that together, perhaps towards the end, and talked about how the mixing of the skills, it's between the skills that the learning happens.

*So something on integrated skills work?*

Yes, it was there, it was mentioned, but something on why. I think it was really rather important.

*Anything else? Any other issues?*

It's to do with what you want to get out of it so rather difficult to make an evaluative judgement. Clearly, on the one hand you want to get results in terms of your practical work but on the other hand what you want to get out is a piece of paper or an exam, so it's the old dichotomy of teaching to the test or learning, or perhaps there's not a dichotomy. This is very much the case too with this course. I think it was very effective at maximising the real learning while trying to ensure we did get through the test at the other end. It's a difficult balance to hold. I did have a feeling that the testing element (which obviously has to be strong), it has a positive result in that you don't forget the experience, it's sort of burned on your memory from that. But it has a negative result in that it, whereas you think it's a time to try lots of things, to take on new techniques, what sometimes happens... there's a tendency, I've noticed it very much in myself and in other people, or even heard advice, play safe, do a standard simple lesson, don't try and explore.

*Mmmm...*

So I think it has a rather strangely conservative and inhibiting effect in the immediate term, while opening out lots of vistas for the long-term. So as soon as you're free of being tested, you can....

*So in a way, the course, because of the testing and assessment, it's a kind of straitjacket?*

It does feel a little bit that way, especially as it's very difficult, you have all this theoretical stuff and all this stuff to assimilate, you have to decide which ones you want anyway and why, which is a huge amount of decision-making really. Then somehow you have to inhabit them to the point where you actually have to stand up and do it in front of other people and incorporate it in other things that you're doing. And that's quite a tall order in the timetable structure that there is.

*Do you feel that's then something that actually happens after the course?*

I think it is actually a sort of one of those Japanese flowers where you add water and then they open, but they do it quite slowly and over a period of time. In that sense it is really quite effective. I think it's possible that if you want shorter term visible changes in people's teaching, maybe that's not how it happens in the real world, it's possible that a much more theory and input in the morning and teaching every afternoon... It could come out rather like dog training

and be less educative in a deeper sense. But it might have surface results in terms of practices going straight into people's teaching.

*So in some ways what you're suggesting is a kind of parallel to doing the course part-time? Because you've got the theory and then you've got the chance to go and try it out?*

Yeah, I think people who do the course when they've got their own classes...I think in a way that could be very effective because they've got the whole...

*That was one of my questions ...some people have said they like part-time ...*

So much has to happen in these weeks and it's not a criticism, we just have to maximise what we can within the parameters we've got.

*Why did you choose the intensive one rather than a part-time one somewhere else?*

Because I'd talked to people who were doing it long-term and they said 'Don't do that, for goodness' sake...it's killing me. Just take the time off and do it'. It's all you can know without doing it. My impression is...in x they do the one in 2 months. How they do it, I don't know. It must be a sort of advanced CELTA because they do teach every day. I think they must make the choices for them. They must more or less spoonfeed them and say 'This is how it is, you've got to activate schemata. That's what it is, so start doing it and we want to see it this afternoon'.

*Different from how you did it.*

Here we were strangely straddled half-way between a thoughtful process which has time to gestate and find its way through to a practical realisation and this other one which is more or less 'This is what it is, now do it'. A glorified CELTA but with a 'D' on the front.

*Laugh...a good way of putting it. In the model that you undertook, did you find that you had help with the practical teaching aspects, of helping the material that you're learning about to gestate and come out in your own teaching? You mentioned coaching before.*

The coaching was one of the excellent aspects of the course. I found those sessions on our lesson plans before we went in and taught them were superb and most productive. Staff were extremely generous in giving of their time. But also very skilful in how they combined contributing, asking leading questions, also letting us find our own way through. I think that was rather special, actually.



*Do you remember that when you were doing the teaching, you had time with an EFL teacher in a class during the week when you were assessed at the end. Did you find that helpful?*

In a way, it was necessary. *Pause*. One teacher that I worked with, it was wonderful, there was instant chemistry, I loved it. Another teacher, it was in no way obstructive, it was just nothing.

*Can you tell me how it was nothing compared to how the other one worked?*

It could be nothing because the person had no time or no interest or perhaps no particular ability in that area whereas the other person, ... 'What do you think about that? Why did you do that then?', then it would raise immediately and then we would set to and I wanted to talk to this person for hours. It was so interesting to discuss the whys and wherefores. The thing I feel about the teaching practice and why it's so different from working with your own class is that so much has to happen. You have to meet a new class, you have to assess their needs, then you've only got 5 days and right at the beginning of the 5 days you've got to make some sort of educated guess, which feels a bit like backing a horse, about where your needs on the course and their needs are going to sort of come together demonstrably. So in a sense a lot of your energy and a degree of, unfortunately, stress comes directly from this. It's like playing with a train set. All of these trains have got to go through the points at the right time to land on the platform on Friday at 10.30. .... But I'm not quite sure about how it develops your learning.

*You've mentioned some positive things and some negative things. Talk to me about these...*

I'm sorry I can't respond terribly usefully, I feel overwhelmingly positive about it as a process. I think that the construction is extremely clever actually.

*In what way?*

I was tempted to say fiendish!

*Laughter...Keep going, keep going...*

Oh gosh. How to define? I'm so sorry I'm going on and on. I don't want to bore you.

*None of this is boring. It is all, every single word, fascinating. It's true. It's the topic of my doctorate, after all.*

I find this it's really to do with the balance. It's a bit like carrot and stick. The balance between support and rigour and testing, and the blank face in front of you just noting down what you did and didn't do, in the assessed lessons. It's hard to comprehend, it seems such an insane thing

to do, such an insane balancing act for everybody, yet oddly, *pause* I think it's very constructive

*Interesting opposites...*

Yes, but then life is like that. Also teaching is like that. This testing and learning, life is like that. It's not just a paradise. Life is a place where we are tested, a little bit of that pressure is realistic.

*So it does mirror real-life a bit? Just more concentrated.*

Yes, exactly.

*You've mentioned some of the roles of the tutors while we've been talking. Do you have any other views of the tutors?*

Well, actually I feel very strongly that I really did the right thing, although I found it quite hard, but I think the reason I found it hard is because I'm so hungry and impatient. If I'd waited another 18 months, it might not have been so hard, but I did want it now and I've really benefited from having it now and I am progressing really fast and I needed it at that speed so that was the cost. That's nobody's fault... For me the tutors were marvellously balanced in what they gave us. They gave us some techniques, not masses, it was more the underlying thinking processes and the frameworks and moving away from PPP towards various different forms and tasks and this was very, very useful. It was not what I would call flashy because there are people around who swing from the chandeliers which are sometimes more about the personality of the person giving the seminar and the need for them to get more work subsequently. My PGCE had some of these hired in. But it did seem to be a bit of smoke and mirrors stuff. Here it didn't seem to me to be smoke and mirrors. There were one or 2 sessions with one tutor which were a little bit warmed-up, like a warmed-up instant meal.

*I'm interested in that image. Tell me more about it*

It was just because it was all written down what the content was to be. Which is fine, it's good to have goals but it didn't come over with any degree of spontaneity. It felt like going through it, sort of hard to take it in, because you had to keep pinching yourself and tell yourself 'This might be useful. Think why!'

*Uh-hum*

One or two of those... which I can see only too well in a busy teaching schedule with various other courses being provided, I can see how that might occur. ....I don't really even like to say it because I feel so positively about it overall. I felt that everybody was unstinting, they were generous, very generous. It can't be easy to provide the amount of energy that it takes.

*People...other people have said to me that they were quite close-knit with the other participants...*

Yes, that was..., yes.

*Did you help each other?*

Yes, yes. Lots.

*One more thing...do you have any views on the theory/practice balance?*

Really that's what I was talking about earlier. It's to do with what you want and how quickly you want to get it. Difficult because...I found it very stressful because... I became too interested in too much stuff. At the time I felt this might be my one and only chance to ever get this so I felt that I couldn't leave stones unturned. I wanted to know what was round the next corner every time which was actually a handicap, given the nature of the course and the goals that need to be arrived at, by a Friday. Quite a cut and dried approach would be beneficial to your sanity and would enable you to get through with the minimal amount of energy and probably quite effectively. But the problem was that part of me didn't want to get through on the minimum of energy, I wanted to get the maximum number of new lines to follow up later, at least have the bit of thread in my hand so that once I'd got through all the other stuff I could then follow it back along. But that put a lot of strain on me. That's just how I am.

*Some people have told me that they've felt they have been told to teach in a certain way. Did you?*

That's it. That was one of the really hard things with the theory and practice... was that the theory isn't cut and dried, if you only read one thing you're alright, but as soon as you've read 4 or 5, you're starting to have to do some thinking. That slows you up. It's good in the long term, bad if you've got to make it by next Friday with some practical result and conclusion. I think that probably is still a valuable training in itself – here's this theory now, you've got to get on with it by Friday, that's very real. This was another way in that this course was fiendish because these people have thought about this, but it's hard!

*Did you feel at any point that the course was telling you to teach like this, and it didn't fit with the way you feel...?*

That was the other thing. It was very hard being asked to behave as if one was intelligent but sense that one had to arrive at certain conclusions otherwise you were going to be in big trouble. So you sort of get a sense that 'I can do this much thinking but at that point I've got to find out some way of finding out what it is they want' and then just say 'Okay, I'm going to get there and any doubts I've still got in my head I'm going to put them on ice and put them in the fridge'. But it took several of the cycles to pick up that that was the name of the game, and that you had to say 'That's an idea for the fridge to take out later'.

*Any incidences where that happened?*

That's the awful thing... now I can't remember! But that's because I think the indoctrination worked! (humourously said)

*Laughter*

So I ...*laughter*...now ... student-centred, learner development, these things are not going to harm anybody or prevent learning, it's ok overall, but at the time it felt like I was being forced through a set of hoops Whether you like it or not, you've got to like it or pretend you do and not have a problem with it.

*Was that mostly in the written or the assessed teaching or a bit of both?*

Everything. You couldn't dare to be yourself. The problem with teaching is although it's about the learner, it's not about you, but the fact that it's you doing it does matter because it's communication and it's got to be real communication.. That's complicated.

*You kind of had to put your DELTA coat on?.*

We felt like that. There wasn't time to assimilate this stuff, make it your own, work out what that meant and come to. ...To me it's interesting to revisit it for me. It helps. It's a nice feeling, thoroughly enjoyable. It's been overwhelmingly beneficial in what to me seems a rather subterranean and long-term kind of way.

*Long-term...*

Yes, in that I feel that I'll be working with seeds that are there for a very, very long time and particularly in terms of the practical realisation in my teaching. It's going to be coming out for years and years and years.

*It's not a sudden thing then?*

It's not something where you say 'There's all these new techniques'. I suppose there is actually, because what I'm doing now I couldn't have done before. It was very subterranean in its way of working and I think sometimes one wants less subterranean things. Sometimes it felt that we could have had more overt techniques, but I suppose the subterranean is rather harder to be had. It does take time and you haven't got the energy at the end of a week of teaching. Acquiring these bigger things takes effort and time.

## APPENDIX SEVEN: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT TWO (annotated)

### Summary of interview:

Alex took the course p/t in 1988 in Japan. Found advantages to doing it p/t but would recommend f/t to others. One tutor, quite didactic, lots of resistance from Alex and others in group because some things not suitable for Japanese context, e.g. learner autonomy. Some impact on practice, e.g. phon script, dictionary work, but not much. Mainly because Japanese context quite limiting. Very useful for increase in language awareness and thinking about theoretical underpinning of classroom practice. Also started reading journals, and experienced increased motivation and confidence. Says the course should include more mentoring.

### Interview transcript:

<b>Biographical data</b>	<p><i>Can you tell me the years that you started and finished your course?</i></p> <p>I started in 1988 and I actually finished 2 yrs later because my first set of practicals was a disaster because the students went to a party instead, which was being organised by the school so I had no students. So I had to wait a year.</p> <p><i>A whole year?</i></p> <p>Yes, it took about a year to organise it.</p> <p><i>So you finished in 1999?</i></p> <p>Yes</p> <p><i>And I take it you passed?</i></p> <p>Yeah, of course.</p> <p><i>Where did you do it?</i></p> <p>I did it in an INSET course at x school in Tokyo over one year.</p> <p><i>Were you working at x?</i></p> <p>I was, yes. And x brought somebody out from the UK to run this course, as teacher enrichment. There was a deal - anyone who was working at the school was entitled to take it for free. The only catch was that if you had started less then 2 yrs previously, you had to work at the school for 2 yrs after you finished the course.</p> <p><i>Did that affect you?</i></p> <p>No...I'd already been there 3 or 4 yrs.</p> <p><i>So it was part-time?</i></p> <p>Yes</p> <p><i>If you'd had the chance to do either, would you still have chosen the p/t</i></p>
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	<p><i>version?</i></p> <p>If I'd been given the chance of a f/t intensive, I certainly would have taken it.</p> <p><i>Over the p/t one? Why?</i></p>
<b>Part-time versus full-time</b>	<p>Basically because of the bit about work expanding to fill the time available. That was certainly true in my case. I had 2 weeks to agonise over an essay so I took the full 2 weeks. If I'd had 2 days on an intensive course, I'd have compressed it into 2 days. Also, I felt that the guy who was running the course had no experience of Japan, there was a certain amount of push-back on the part of the students, including me. We'd say things like 'Yes, okay, good, but that doesn't work in Japan' and he would kind of backtrack a little bit and he would go off and rethink things, which was positive, but at the time the course seemed to be meandering a little bit.</p>
<b>Tutor and input sessions</b>	<p><i>Because of that?</i></p>
<b>Part-time versus f/t</b>	<p>Yes, and because of one or two other things.</p> <p><i>Can I just ask you if you recall any of the things that you felt didn't work in Japan?</i></p>
<b>Relevance to context</b>	<p>Yes, he talked about student autonomy, which none of us disagrees with, but it doesn't work in a Japanese context very often, at lower levels at least. Student independence. That was one of the key areas that most of us said 'No way, it won't work here'.</p> <p><i>Was your feeling 'Generally this course isn't suitable for my teaching context', or 'Generally this course is suitable for my context'? Or did you have any feelings either way?</i></p>
<b>Impact</b>	<p>I think by and large it was suitable. Certainly it forced me and most of my colleagues to sit down and use the phonetic alphabet. It pushed us to really think about what we were doing and that was good. There were just one or 2 areas where we thought the practical application of one or two of these ideas was not suited to.</p> <p><i>Can I take you back to the p/t thing you said. Were there any advantages of doing it p/t? Some people have said to me they could try things out in between the input sessions. Does that resonate with you in any way?</i></p>
<b>Part-time versus full-time</b>	<p>It does. Although more in the later stages of the course when it became more orientated to classroom practice. So we were required to do that in our assignments anyway, take an idea and try it out and write back what our experiences were.</p> <p><i>Was that useful?</i></p> <p>Yes, it was actually.</p> <p><i>You said the later stages of the course. Was it divided into theory and practice?</i></p>
<b>Tutor and input sessions</b>	<p>Yes. There were some key sessions on theory at the beginning. The guy who was running it was taken aback when he realised just how deskilled teachers in Japan can become. In many ways it's not a very challenging teaching environment and you forget things and you become very fixed in your approach to a monolingual group who have the same expectations. So he</p>
<b>Context</b>	

	<p>took us through the theory, then the basics that most of us knew already, then later it became much more geared towards the observed lessons. To a certain extent, he was very concerned that the course would be a success which meant that most of us had to pass.</p> <p><i>Was that because he'd come all the way from the UK to do the course?</i></p> <p>Yeah, he was on a 2-yr contract with the school. If it seemed to be paying off, it was good.</p> <p><i>In other words, if people passed?</i></p> <p>Yeah, and if people were happy with the course, and they would be happy if they passed. So he was very keen that we should all get through. So he observed a fair number of lessons and he critiqued our often pathetic attempts to make up material.</p> <p><i>Was that useful, someone critiquing your lessons?</i></p>
<b>Coaching and improving teaching</b>	<p>Yes, it was nerve-wracking because he didn't spare our feelings. The first couple of times he put me on edge and others too. Then I realised why he was doing it. He wasn't just being nasty for the sake of being nasty. He was being nasty because he wanted us to avoid certain pitfalls.</p> <p><i>When you felt that he wasn't sparing your feelings, did you feel that what he was saying was fair?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Essentially yes. There were one or two occasions when he wasn't taking into consideration that the Japanese context was a bit different.</p> <p><i>Did he get better at that?</i></p> <p>Yes, he was teaching a few Japanese classes himself and gradually he realised that they do need a lot of hand-holding, they do want a lot of pronunciation, etc. He mellowed a bit. Hard but fair.</p> <p><i>Did you think those observations and critiques helped you to progress in your teaching?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>That's a good question. They forced me to think again about things and to be ready to defend things I did and didn't want to give up, for example. So that was useful. On the other hand the teaching environment was still the same, so that didn't change. So he could introduce these fairly mainstream EFL ideas then we went back into the classroom and we had to basically forget about that because it didn't work. In those days, it didn't work it does now. So yes, a temporary re-skilling, for the purposes of passing the exam, I think.</p>
<b>Relevance to context</b>	<p><i>What about later contexts? Was there anything you were able to use later in subsequent contexts?</i></p>
<b>Impact</b>	<p>It's hard to say now how much of my classroom practice after the course was actually due to what I learned on the course and what I just picked up. At that time in my teaching career I was reading the ELT journal religiously, I'd go to conferences and listen to presentations. Whereas now I feel I've heard it all before. I think to some extent the Dip course did encourage that, because it was like a re-introduction to semi-academic work for me.</p> <p><i>Had it been quite a long time?</i></p>



	<p>I finished university in 77 so it was a very long time.</p> <p><i>Impact again. Would I be right in saying that it might have had some impact on your later teaching?</i></p> <p>Oh yeah (<i>emphatically</i>). It's just hard to quantify how much.</p> <p><i>Do you recall any ways it might have impacted? Things that you changed, your motivation?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Certainly motivation increased. I felt more confident in doing more intensive pronunciation work. I got my head round the phonetic alphabet, although I'm getting a bit rusty again now. I found myself using the script, focusing my students' attention on it.</p> <p><i>How useful was that for them?</i></p> <p>I don't know but it made me feel I was being a more confident professional teacher.</p> <p><i>Did the course help you to progress in your career in any way?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Before I passed the exam I had moved on to a university anyway. That move to a university was based purely on my first degree, an MA. The recruiter said 'What's the RSA Dip?' So it didn't offer me any real concrete advantages in Japan, but I had thought of going elsewhere.</p> <p><i>Was it any use later in any other job?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>It bumped up my rate of pay at x. I don't think so, to be honest. That was because I'd settled in Japan. If I'd moved to another country or gone to work for the British Council more than p/t, maybe, but not especially otherwise.</p> <p><i>Have you done any other form of professional development which could compare with the Dip in terms of impact? I think you mentioned before you'd done a masters...</i></p> <p>An MSc degree, which I found much easier than the Dip.</p> <p><i>Why was that?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Because the Dip was quite a good grounding. A lot of it came back when we were doing the masters. Even though the masters was fairly intensive, I didn't have to work at the same time. Also the other people on the Dip course, there was actually a higher level of competition</p> <p><i>Than the masters course?</i></p>
<b>Fellow participants</b>	<p>Yes. A lot of people on the masters course were real slackers actually. On the Dip course there was a real sense of competition.</p> <p><i>Some people have said their fellow Dip participants became very supportive and close-knit because of the stress, others didn't. You've mentioned competitive....</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>No, in that context, with possible promotions and so on, people were looking to impress the course tutor who was a conduit to the powers that be. Most of the school directors were actually doing the course. So there was very little in the way of mutual support, there was a lot of back-biting.</p>

	<p><i>Was that going on anyway or was that a result of the course?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>To a certain extent anyway, but the course certainly intensified it. A few other people came from outside and they resented the fact that we were getting it free. The course tutor paired me up with another person and we couldn't stand each other. We both went and complained and asked to change and he said no.</p>
<b>Tutor</b>	<p><i>Did he give a reason for that?</i></p>
<b>Fellow participants</b>	<p>He said 'You two just belong together, you're both stubborn, opinionated, quite arrogant people, you should just stick together and work it out'. It became a little better. I didn't see any example of mutual support except the 2 or 3 people who were doing the day-time courses at our school, they were close-knit anyway. But those of us teaching evenings, I was assistant director at one school so I had to corral them into coming in and doing shifts.</p>
	<p><i>So were there status issues?</i></p>
	<p>Certainly. Definitely. Both within the school and those from other schools.</p>
	<p><i>None of this 'We helped .. and talked about essays and we lent each other books...'?</i></p>
<b>Fellow participants</b>	<p>Virtually none. I remember people bouncing ideas off each other for classroom stuff, but it was partly because of the status thing and partly because I was much less tolerant than I am now. I once blew somebody off for talking about the affective filter and I asked 'Why are you spouting that jargon at me? Don't you just mean the students were relaxed?' and he got very upset and we got in a real huff. I was a bit intolerant of that stuff. A colleague and I had this game – we'd try and find the same idea in Palmer's stuff from the 1920s. I believe there's nothing new in EFL. It's just being recycled and relabelled for career purposes. So I was very cynical that a lot of the stuff that we were being fed and I think there was fairly largely good-natured friction between two or three of us and the course tutor. But no, I remember very little in the way of mutual support and cooperation.</p>
<b>Tutor and input sessions (theory)</b>	<p><i>You've mentioned the tutor quite a lot. Did you only have the one tutor for the whole course?</i></p>
	<p>Mmmm, yeah. He would occasionally bring in other people. But as one-offs. But just one tutor for the course.</p>
	<p><i>Was that good, bad or indifferent, the fact you only had one?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Bad in the sense of, if he was in a bad mood or there had been friction, the effects went on for weeks. Good in that once we'd sussed out what he wanted, what he expected, what his standards were, that was fine. On the Masters course I did I found that someone would set an assignment and then go off to a conference or something, and someone else would mark it. We didn't know if they were working to the same standards, the same set of expectations as the tutor who'd set the assignment. So good and bad points. We didn't get much out of the people who were brought in, because they were largely old Japan hands, and we knew what they were going to say and they knew what we knew, but they said it anyway.</p>
	<p><i>So back to this guy, the fact that you only had one person as a tutor. Was he good, in your eyes, was he successful?</i></p>

Ditto	<p>Yeah, I think he was actually. Hard but fair.</p> <p><i>Can you remember other ways in which he was good? The input sessions, for example, do you remember anything about his style, anything that sticks in your mind?</i></p>
Ditto	<p>He was very didactic, very old school. Not a young man, almost as old as I am now. He was quite, if you don't mind a little vulgarity, he was a bit of a stick up the ass. He had very clear ideas about what was right and what was wrong. I felt at times he could have been a little bit more flexible. And I would say 'You say this and I do it this way and it seems to work just as well'. Now, looking back, I think he was probably guiding us towards the correct 'airquotes' RSA dip answers.</p>
Teaching how you're told to AND Coaching and improving teaching	<p><i>So did you feel he was telling you to teach in a certain way? Was he delivering a certain package?</i></p> <p>I think he was to a certain extent delivering a package. In the classroom you could do what you liked unless it was an observed lesson. But if you didn't follow the rules, follow the advice, you had to be ready to defend that. I think that was good, that was good.</p> <p><i>The fact that you had to defend it?</i></p> <p>Yes, the fact that you had to explain why you'd done it this way, not the way he suggested.</p> <p><i>Did he then accept it when you said that?</i></p>
Tutor and input sessions	<p>Sometimes reluctantly. But keep in mind that part way through the course I knew I was moving to a university, I had my long-term visa for Japan. It didn't really matter whether he liked what I said or not. I had that sort of front of confidence. I think he quickly realised there were 3 or 4 of us like that. We weren't being confrontational, but we were only prepared to bend so far, for things that we thought were important.</p> <p><i>Generally, did he deal well with that kind of thing, with resistance?</i></p>
Ditto	<p>He tried to make a joke out of it, which was fine. He would say 'Well that's it. But x over here is not going to agree with a word I've said today'. And I'd say 'Yeah you're right, I don't'. It became a kind of laugh.</p> <p><i>So he was able to deal with it.</i></p> <p>Yeah, he was able to deal with it. What he had trouble dealing with was nervousness or panic.</p> <p><i>In class?</i></p>
Ditto AND Coaching and improving teaching	<p>In the observations... you know. I heard 2 or 3 women say he'd said 'Just snap out of it! Get in there and follow your lesson plan' There were a couple of younger, less experienced people in there, they were just off the Cert, they'd had hardly any teaching experience and they got thrown into the Dip, so it must have been hard for them, and I think he could have been a bit more sympathetic in some cases.....</p> <p><i>Why did you decide to do the Dip at that point in your career?</i></p>

<b>Reasons for taking the course</b>	<p>Because I was given the offer. Purely that, purely that. Actually I'd been thinking of going back to do a Masters somewhere. But I wasn't that comfortably off in those days and the fact that it was being offered free. You were given a lesson off a week to do the tutorial session in. That seemed like a big advantage, it seemed like too good an offer to pass up.</p> <p><i>Some people have said to me, have used the term 'It was a key learning event in my career', others have said 'Eminently forgettable'. Where would you lie along that, if it was a continuum?</i></p>
<b>Impact</b>	<p>Half way along that cline, I suppose. It wasn't a key .... Oh no, let me backtrack there. It was a key thing for a time, because when I finally got it, I was a bit puffed up about it, because it's not a common qualification in Japan. Since then I've been in my university work, when I've been on a selection committee, I've always, always preferred a candidate with the Dip over somebody who didn't have it.</p> <p><i>Why was that?</i></p>
<b>Impact</b>	<p>Because I do feel that, whether you did the Dip p/t or f/t, if you have it, you're probably a pretty safe pair of hands. You can be thrown into just about any situation without making a complete dog's behind of it.</p> <p><i>You mentioned before that it gives a good grounding...could you unpack that idea a bit? What kind of things does it give you a good grounding in?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Phonology. Not for me so much classroom teaching practice, because I had that more or less down before I started the course. Grammar, syntax of course. I was horrified when I got my first essay back how weak and patchy my grammatical knowledge was. Language systems, basically. It forces you to get your head down on the grammar books and to think about things.</p> <p><i>So it raises your own language awareness and consolidates it?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Yes, it does, certainly. And it equips you better to pass on information to students, especially in a context like Japan, where they're always asking obscure grammar questions.</p> <p><i>If I could take you back to the MSc again, I've just asked you whether the Dip was a key learning event in your EFL career. If I asked you the same question about the MSc, if you were to compare the two?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Hmmm, <i>pause</i>, probably the Dip was more prominent, a bigger thing, it was my first experience of that kind of thing. I found the MSc fairly easy-going compared to the Dip, no observed lessons for one thing, at least not in the course options I took. So there was less stress on the MSc. <i>Pause</i> Neither of them was really a very key career learning event for a long time, for me.</p> <p><i>Is there anything you're doing now in the classroom which you picked up on the Dip?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>That's a good question. Maybe I push my students towards dictionary work more than I did in the past.</p> <p><i>Monolingual dictionaries?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Yes, wherever possible, yes. I'm probably more confident in terms of working on phonology and on syntax. The Dip forced me to become acquainted with some of the grammar books, like Murphy. So I'm better able to push students</p>

	<p>towards useful materials. Beyond that I'm not very sure there's very much.</p> <p><i>So in terms of its durability, do you think it's had durability for you? A certain shelf-life-type thing?</i></p>
<b>Ditto</b>	<p>Perhaps less for me because I've been in Japan, compared to people who've been moving round the world.</p> <p><i>Because of the context?</i></p>
<b>Context</b>	<p>Because of the context, yes. I honestly do feel that the demands on teachers in Japan are lower than in many countries. Students expectations are lower, the pace is slower, teachers front the class more, teachers spoonfeed the students to a larger extent.</p> <p><i>So in some ways that would make the demands larger. Or just different?</i></p> <p>Just different. Students are much less likely than Italian or French to come up and ask you a big question about phonology or overall grammar structure. To that extent, it's probably been less directly useful to me over time.</p> <p><i>One final question. Has anyone ever asked you before about your Dip?</i></p> <p>Only when people have contemplated doing it and have asked me 'Do you think it was useful?', and I've said 'Yes, it was good. Do it full-time if you can'.</p> <p><i>So you'd recommend it?</i></p> <p>Yes, especially if they could get it for free or at a discount. <i>Pause</i> The only other situation is at job interviews, they've asked 'What is this?' and I've had to explain it.</p> <p><i>Before I switch the tape off, is there anything else that I haven't asked about or mentioned that is in your mind?</i></p>
<b>Stress</b>	<p><i>Pause</i> I think at the beginning you mentioned the level of demand of the course. I found it quite a stressful course, partly because you had more time to think about things, too much time to think about things perhaps. And work does expand, as I said. I found the course quite a strain actually, quite stressful, very demanding. But on the upside, it did make the MSc course seem like a cakewalk.</p> <p><i>I said that was the last question, but I'm afraid I've just seen something else I wanted to ask...sorry.</i></p> <p>No problem, take your time.</p>
<b>Not included but should have been AND Coaching and improving teaching</b>	<p><i>With hindsight, if I was to say 'Is there anything which wasn't included on your Dip course which you think should have been?', what would it be?</i></p> <p>Hmmm, <i>pause</i>...I would have liked to see more interaction on the tutor's part with lesson plans. When we had an observed lesson plan, he sat with us and said 'Now what are you going to do here?'</p> <p><i>With each person?</i></p>
<b>Coaching</b>	<p>Yes, sometimes we did them in pairs actually. I would like to have had maybe two or three sessions of him going over the lesson plan with me. More in the context of 'What do you think would be good here? I plan to do this and this</p>

<p><b>and improving teaching</b></p>	<p>and this. How does that sound to you?' Sort of non-judgemental kind of mentoring support.</p>
	<p><i>So on lessons other than the one that was going to be assessed?</i></p>
	<p>Yes, perhaps.</p>
	<p><i>So you were looking for a mentor?</i></p>
<p><b>Assessment versus development AND Coaching and improving teaching</b></p>	<p>Yeah. There wasn't much in the way of mentoring, apart from this very judgemental situation of the observed lesson. The course would have been richer if maybe some people who had done the course successfully could have been brought in as mentors. At least people to bounce ideas off. To a certain extent this did happen between people who were on the course, but only when we were told to. I think there was a great sort of nervousness of exposing your lesson plan to other people, you know. Especially that oddly competitive situation of two people being observed together.</p>
	<p><i>You saw each other?</i></p>
<p><b>Tutors (and input sessions)</b></p>	<p>Yes, but sometimes someone would deviate from the plan and then you were stuck. At one point, I did say to the tutor 'Can you crack down on that, because if I can stick to the lesson plan, others can too, and I don't want to be put in that situation again'. I remember I had a real bust-up about that. I said 'In the next observed lesson, I'm going to be first or I'm not doing it'. He said 'Well, don't do it then' and I thought 'Oh, he's called my bluff'. He was often very hard, but fair, but very hard. Then at other times, I did think he was a bit too lax about things like that. Perhaps he took that person aside and chewed them up in private about going off the lesson plan. That's quite possible. I didn't hear about that.</p>
	<p><i>Generally, then, I'm understanding that there should have been, in your eyes, more focus on development rather than just assessment?</i></p>
<p><b>Assessment versus development</b></p>	<p>Yes (<i>said emphatically</i>). Yes. The process of developing and improving the teacher outside that pretty strict assessment context. That's what I would recommend if I was running the Dip.</p>
	<p><i>Thank you very much. Now I'm going to turn the tape off...</i></p>
	<p><b>After the tape was off (from notes taken immediately by the interviewer):</b></p>
<p><b>Feedback on the interview process</b></p>	<p><i>How did you find this Dip interview just now, as a researcher yourself?</i></p>
	<p>You asked searching questions and made me think. You followed up things I said. You picked up later on things I'd said before. You know your material.</p>

## APPENDIX EIGHT

### CATEGORIES EMERGING FROM GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS

The thirteen categories emerging were of differing sizes and were provisionally called:

- *Assessment versus development*
- *Improving teaching*
- *Fellow participants*
- *Full-time versus part-time*
- *Impact*
- *Long time to filter into teaching*
- *Not included but should have been*
- *Not suiting certain contexts*
- *Previous teaching experience*
- *Reasons for taking the course*
- *Stress*
- *Teaching how you're told*
- *Tutors and input sessions.*

## APPENDIX NINE

### Raw data in response to question: 'Why do you think the course had an impact?'

(Asterisks denote points which surfaced regularly in the interviews)

#### A. Pre-course factors

*I was very receptive to change at that stage in my career \**

*I was really ready for that kind of thing \**

*It builds on your own previous teaching experience \**

*I was motivated to do it*

*It was the natural progression in my career, a natural progression from the CELTA*

#### B. People

*The tutors \**

*Sharing with and learning from other people on the course \**

*The way it was taught was a good model for us \**

*I had support from my employer during the course (part-time course)*

#### C. General observations on the experience of the course

*I really enjoyed the course \**

*It's such an intense experience*

*It was a holistic learning experience; it covered both theory and practice in a related way*

*It was interesting*

*It was a good course*

#### D. Post-course factors

*It got me out of a rut and onto something new*

*It got me where I wanted to go*

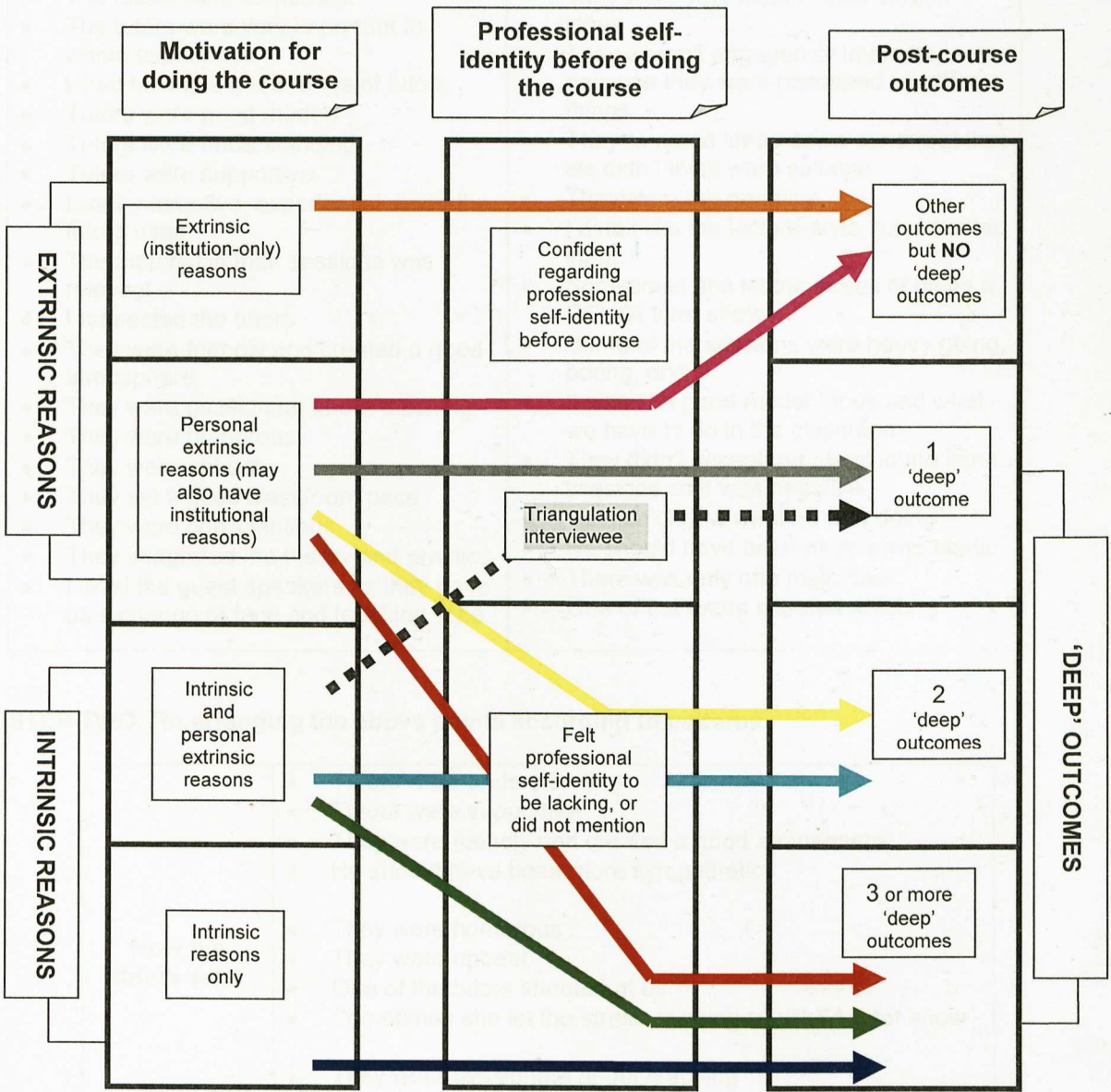
*I had support from my new employer after the course*

*It helped me to think in my subsequent work about lesson planning and the staging of a lesson*



APPENDIX TEN:

ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATION, SELF-IDENTITY AND IMPACT



## APPENDIX ELEVEN:

### ANALYSIS OF CATEGORY 'TUTORS AND INPUT SESSIONS'

**STEP ONE: collecting the data from the above category and reducing it to points**

Positive points	Negative points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tutors were competent</li> <li>• The tutors were very important to whole experience</li> <li>• Liked having a good range of tutors</li> <li>• Tutors were good models</li> <li>• Tutors were understanding</li> <li>• Tutors were supportive</li> <li>• Liked interactive, experiential mode the tutors used</li> <li>• The material in their sessions was relevant</li> <li>• I respected the tutors</li> <li>• They were friendly and created a good atmosphere</li> <li>• They were passionate about teaching</li> <li>• They were humorous</li> <li>• They were upbeat</li> <li>• They set a good classroom pace</li> <li>• They were conscientious</li> <li>• They integrated the theory and practice</li> <li>• I liked the guest speakers as they gave us a change of face and teaching style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They were very fixed in their views / ideas</li> <li>• They weren't engaged or interested because they were distracted by other things</li> <li>• They rammed ideas down our throat that we didn't think were suitable</li> <li>• They were too negative</li> <li>• I didn't like the lecture-style, tutor-fronted input</li> <li>• Sometimes she let the stress of being a DELTA tutor show</li> <li>• Some of the sessions were heavy-going, boring, dry</li> <li>• It wasn't a good model for us and what we have to do in the classroom</li> <li>• They didn't accept our ideas in the input sessions so it was negative</li> <li>• He didn't know what he was doing</li> <li>• He should have been more sympathetic</li> <li>• There was only one main tutor</li> <li>• One of the tutors shouted at us</li> </ul>

**STEP TWO: Re-arranging the above points according to patterns**

<b>How the tutors were</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutors were understanding</li> <li>• Tutors were supportive</li> <li>• They were friendly and created a good atmosphere</li> <li>• He should have been more sympathetic</li> <li>• They were humorous</li> <li>• They were upbeat</li> <li>• One of the tutors shouted at us</li> <li>• Sometimes she let the stress of being a DELTA tutor show</li> <li>• They were passionate about teaching</li> <li>• They weren't engaged or interested because they were distracted by other things</li> <li>• They were very fixed in their views / ideas</li> </ul>
<b>What the tutors did</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tutors were competent</li> <li>• He didn't know what he was doing</li> <li>• They were conscientious</li> <li>• They set a good classroom pace</li> <li>• Tutors were good models</li> <li>• It wasn't a good model for us and what we have to do in the classroom</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I liked the interactive, experiential mode the tutors used</li> <li>• I didn't like the lecture-style, tutor-fronted input</li> <li>• Some of the sessions were heavy-going, boring, dry</li> <li>• The material in their sessions was relevant</li> <li>• They integrated the theory and practice</li> <li>• They rammed ideas down our throat that we didn't think were suitable</li> <li>• They were too negative in their feedback</li> <li>• They didn't accept our ideas in the input sessions so it was negative</li> </ul>
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tutors were very important to whole experience</li> <li>• I respected the tutors</li> </ul>
<b>Variety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liked having a good range of tutors</li> <li>• I liked the guest speakers as they gave us a change of face and teaching style</li> <li>• There was only one main tutor</li> </ul>

**STEP THREE: Re-reading the patterns/groups of ideas, distilling the points, then naming them**

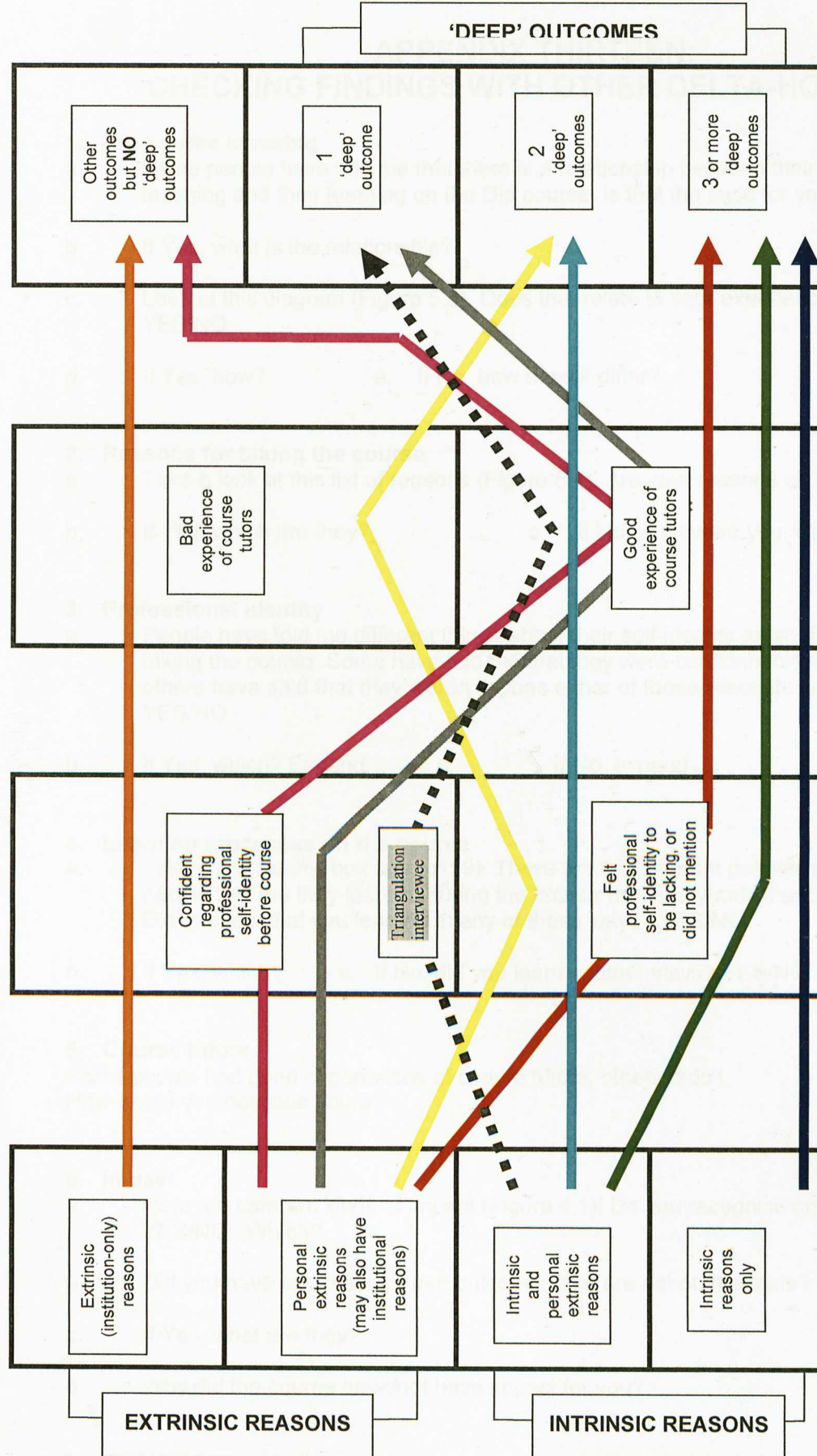
**1. Who/how you are (trainer persona)**

- In control of oneself and one's presence in the classroom, and coping with the job
- Engaged/involved/interested in the participants and the job
- Flexible in outlook; listening/accepting ideas
- Positive and upbeat
- Understanding/sympathetic/supportive
- Able to create the right atmosphere
- Aware that, for many participants, tutors are very important to the whole experience

**2. What you do (trainer style in the classroom)**

- Be flexible, not tell trainees what they should think or how they should teach
- Provide input which is interactive and experiential, not in lecture mode
- Be a good model of classroom practice
- Be competent; knowledgeable about theory and practice and able to integrate them
- Be aware that, for many participants, tutors are very important to the whole experience

**3. Variety/range of tutors is important**



APPENDIX TWELVE: ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATION, SELF-IDENTITY, EXPERIENCE OF TUTORS AND IMPACT

## **APPENDIX THIRTEEN: CHECKING FINDINGS WITH OTHER DELTA-HOLDERS**

### **1. Pre-course teaching**

- a. Some people have told me that there is a relationship between their pre-course teaching and their learning on the Dip course. Is that the case for you? YES/NO.
- b. If Yes, what is the relationship?
- c. Look at this diagram (Figure 5.3). Does that relate to your experience in any way? YES/NO.
- d. If Yes, how?                      e. If No, how does it differ?

### **2. Reasons for taking the course**

- a. Take a look at this list of reasons (Figure 5.1). Are your reasons on this list? YES/NO.
- b. If Yes, which are they?                      c. If No, what were your reasons?

### **3. Professional identity**

- a. People have told me different things about their self-identity as an EFL teacher before taking the course. Some have told me that they were confident classroom teachers; others have said that they weren't. Does either of these resonate with your experience? YES/NO.
- b. If Yes, which? Expand...                      c. If No, expand...

### **4. Learning processes on the course**

- a. Take a look at this box (see p119). These are the different pathways through which people told me they learned during the course (not everybody mentioned everything). Did you feel that you learned in any of these ways? YES/NO
- b. If Yes, which?                      c. If No, did you learn in other ways? YES/NO

### **5. Course tutors**

Some people had good experiences of course tutors; others didn't.  
How would you describe yours?

### **6. Impact**

- a. Here are different kinds of impact (Figure 4.1). Do you recognise any of them? YES/NO. Which?
- b. Did you have any other course outcomes that are not on the table? YES/NO.
- c. If Yes, what are they?
- d. Why did the course have/not have impact for you?

### **7. Finally...**

The answers you've given suggest this line on Appendix Twelve (explain which, why and compare it with other people). What's your opinion of that?